

The BURNT
OFFERING

MRS. EVERARD COTES

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BY

MRS. EVERARD COTES

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CHAPTER I

“YOU can’t get in here, Baboo. There isn’t room.” The train was standing in the little pink station of Pubni, on its way to Calcutta. A lean old man with water in a goat-skin slaked the platform with a flourishing jet from his fingers, and the afternoon sun slanted on the purple bougain-villiers over the gate-posts of the station-master’s garden. It was a warm, gentle, still halting-place ; between the grunts of the pausing engine a bee buzzed audibly in the bougain-villiers ; and a crow in a pipal across the lines seemed to deliver himself for the whole district.

“How many persons are in this carriage, sir ?”

“Never mind about that, Baboo. There isn’t room for you.”

The young man spoke good-naturedly enough, but he definitely barred the entrance with the lower half of a leg in flannel trousers, and a foot in a brown leather boot. He had not taken the trouble to shut the door.

The person addressed as “Baboo,” who wore neat European clothes and a small white and gold twisted head-dress, nevertheless ventured to step upon the foot-board and look into the carriage, which contained a good deal of dusty luggage and one other young gentleman,

stretched upon the opposite seat and reading the *Planters' Gazette*.

"I must insist upon coming in here," he said; "you are but two passengers."

"No, you don't," said the owner of the brown leather boot; but the roll-up of the new-comer was already being pushed by a coolie under the barrier leg. This awoke the young man on the seat opposite to sudden and expressive wrath. He raised himself threateningly on one elbow.

"Get out of this," he exclaimed, "or damn it, I'll hoof you out."

All the world might hear, if the world had not been fortunately absent. One person did, a tall English girl who seemed to be the only other passenger. She was walking up and down the platform sending her long shadow in front of her, and she heard. She paused for an instant, startled; then she simply stopped and listened. The approaching water-carrier waited with deference until she should resume her walk, gave it up and ran on, shedding his cascades in a semi-circle before her. With her hands thrust into the pockets of her dust-cloak she made a casual but attentive spectator.

The coolie pushed the roll-up further in, and followed it with a bag.

"Excuse me," said Bepin Behari Dey, making an attempt to pass the defensive leg, "I have a first-class ticket and I claim accommodation."

"Oh, get out, Baboo," said the youth at the door, "and don't give trouble. No admittance here, don't you see? Can't have you spitting about here."

"Ticket or no ticket you can jolly well travel somewhere else," announced he who was lying down, and sprang up to enforce his words. "Here—out you go."

The Indian could not be said to be in, but his luggage, sped by a couple of vigorous kicks, went out for him, alighting not far from the feet of the girl looking on, who came, with interest, a step nearer.

"Sir, I do not expectorate."

"Oh yes, you do, Baboo. You expectorate all right. Anyhow"—and the door finished the sentence with a bang.

The young native certainly showed self-control. There was cloud in his glance, but no lightning. He looked more determined to enforce his point than indignant at his repulse. The resentment and dislike in the face he turned upon the occupants of the carriage seemed rather a settled and habitual thing than any outcome of his present treatment.

"I will send for the station-master," he said.

"By all means," returned the second defender of the carriage. "Here he comes. Hi, there—Station-master! Here's this Baboo making a most infernal disturbance trying to shove himself into this carriage. Just run him in somewhere else, will you?"

The station-master, a fat Eurasian, a good deal darker than the Bengali, looked at him with the expression of a gentleman who could sympathise with the grievance of his fellows, and waited in irritated official tolerance for what an inferior might have to say.

Bepin produced his ticket.

"It is first-class," he said, "and I think the only other first-class is a ladies' compartment."

The station-master took the ticket, examined it, frowned upon it, and handed it back.

"What is the use of getting in where you know objection will be taken?" he said in the clicking, doubling talk of the mixed race. "Further on there is

a second-class carriage which you can have *entirely* to yourself. You can be private there."

"If I wished to be private I was at liberty to reserve a carriage," protested the Bengali. The arbiter looked as if nothing in the world would make him responsible.

"Well, you had better get in somewhere," he said. "She is going now. I cannot stop the train for disputes amongst passengers," and turned upon an indifferent heel.

Appeal to authority having failed him, and the carriage door being now definitely shut in his face, the young man stepped back upon the platform, and the hovering coolie again seized his luggage. When Joan Mills spoke to him he gave her a violent look, as if some further indignity was to be expected from her. But that was not her intention.

"The other first-class carriage is not reserved for ladies," she told him. "My father is with me, and there is plenty of room. Will you not come in there?"

Her voice trembled with anger, but it was equally characteristic of her that she did not take her hands out of her pockets.

"Thank you, I am obliged to you ; but I do not wish to intrude in your carriage."

"It is not our carriage, and you will be very welcome," said Miss Mills, casting, as she spoke, a glance upon the victorious occupants of the compartment in which they might have read a measure of contempt for her race as excusable as it was extravagant.

"Then I will come."

The girl led the way, Bepin following with the laden coolie ; and the youth nearest the window thrust a curious head out to watch their disappearance into the train. He may have felt a little uncomfortable, that

one, since he took the trouble to address the station-master standing on the platform, who also saw the matter settled.

"No accounting for tastes," he said, and the flattered Eurasian replied, "No, sir ; you may well say so," perhaps forgetting for the moment how perfectly he himself illustrated the truth of the proverb.

"Father," said the girl, as she and Bepin entered the carriage, and the train moved out, "I have told this gentleman there is plenty of room in here."

The elderly man she addressed looked up from his newspaper, and a beam of understanding passed between him and his daughter. It was as if she gave him a cue and he took it, not without satisfaction, as if they fell together upon a fact which had been hitherto, ready as they were to believe it, only a traveller's tale.

"So there is—so there is," said he, and increased it by bringing his feet from the couch to the floor.

"We should be sorry to take up more than we've paid for," he added, with that gleam of the eye which sometimes in a rugged countenance takes the whole duty of indicating humour. He was in his shirt-sleeves and was smoking. A hard felt "bowler" hat hung upon a hook with his coat, and the rest of his clothes were too decent and respectable to belong to anybody in what is known as society. He had a heavy frame that stooped, a journeyman's face with the complexion of a student, and powerful hands that were not a labouring man's. He looked at Bepin benevolently over his spectacles.

"I hope you'll excuse my pipe," he said, waving it at the young native, who had taken his seat upon the further end of the couch opposite.

"Please do not trouble to mention it."

"You see I am making myself at home in your

country," the elder continued jocularly, as if straining for anything that would carry courtesy. "It's a warmer place at this time of year than I was led to believe."

The speech belonged to the man, but it had a resonance that had somehow been acquired. He spoke, in fact, as if Bepin were an audience, and included his daughter with the habit of a person whose words are not to be wasted.

The young man answered indifferently that the heat was unusual for the time of year. He felt no interest whatever in this person, whose social type he had recognised at a glance, and whom he privately put down to be some new sort of missionary. Missionaries did this kind of thing; it was part of their character and their errand. Such benevolence covered purposes of their own and would have been extended as readily to any one—a sweeper. Hence it was not particularly acceptable to Bepin Behari Dey, of the clerkly caste.

Joan, watching him from her corner, supposed the young man's resentment not yet appeased. Her father thought again of his pipe.

"Sure you don't object to tobacco?" he repeated.

Bepin smiled, and put up his hand with fingers spread in protest.

"I assure you not in the least," he said, just a little condescendingly.

Joan in her corner reflected an instant, then took something from her pocket and leaned forward.

"Perhaps you smoke yourself," she said, offering him the contents of a cigarette case. The act was perfectly simple, grave, and matter of fact; and it looked unpremeditated, though I think it was not that.

Bepin drew back, glanced at Miss Mills, and took a

cigarette. After all they did not seem to be missionaries, these people. No missionary *mem* could be conceived to carry, bestow, or light a cigarette, as she was now doing. No *padre-sahib* would allow his daughter to do such a thing. But this one not only allowed, but approved, it seemed, if he was to be believed.

"My daughter won't smoke a pipe," he was saying, "though I tell her it would be a great deal better for her. It's poor miserable work, cigarette smoking, in my opinion. But she's got her habit, just as I've got mine, and she has every bit as much right to it. What I say is this—if tobacco's bad for her it's bad for me. And I should be very loath to think it was bad for me."

He would joke, this elderly commoner; he took the liberties of a person deferred to by consent. Yet the smile by which he asserted himself a genial fellow, was not particularly at home upon his lips. He had to look for it and put it on like his spectacles. One could see the nature behind, serious and austere, which required for certain purposes of life the help of such a smile.

"A person," reflected Bepin, "who has earned a great deal and wishes to keep it."

"I have smoked very little since I left Cambridge," he said.

"Were you at Cambridge?" exclaimed Joan.

"For three years. I am M.A. of Cambridge. And two years in London afterwards. And one in Paris."

"I was only thinking—How *monstrous*!" said the girl. "This gentleman," she said to her father, "was refused admittance to their carriage in the most brutal manner, by a couple of Europeans just now. We had heard such things happened, but we could hardly believe it," she added.

Her father took his pipe from his lips, which composed themselves sternly. He opened them to say, "I thought as much."

Bepin, to hide his embarrassment, laughed. All sorts of things were hidden in the laugh which, on the outside deprecated, made nothing of the incident.

"Oh," he said, "that is very common. European gentlemen in India do not like travelling with the people of the country. We are not always able to assert our rights."

"European *gentlemen*!" breathed Joan. "And these are the people who govern you—these are your civil administrators!"

"No. The officials do not speak in that way to Indians. Those were common men, what we call *chota-sahibs*—mill assistants, I think."

"I wish I knew for certain." Plainly, she would have preferred to be right.

"I am thinking you'll report this to the Company," said her father.

"If you do—if you think it worth while," said the girl with quick tact, "you may count upon me as a witness. I saw the whole thing."

"It should not be allowed to pass," urged her father.

Bepin looked contemptuous. "Oh, I can complain," he said, "but what is the use? That would not prevent the same thing happening again. Besides, it is a small matter. I am not hurt."

"Then," said Joan, "you must be a philosopher."

"Yes—I hope. But I am not so good a philosopher as my father was. He is dead now, but for years he always travelled third-class, and he was not a poor man."

"Why did he do that?" asked Joan.

Bepin laughed again. "It was a fancy of his, since

one day he was travelling in a first-class carriage and two young officers got in, with very wet and muddy boots, at a small station where they had been shooting the *jheels*. They were very angry finding my father in the carriage, and told him to get out. He refused to get out, so when the train started they ordered him to pull off their boots. He refused this also, but they stood over him and compelled him to do it, and being an old man he dared not resist. So after that he travelled third-class rather, with the coolies."

Joan's eyes blazed.

"In your own country!" she exclaimed. "How can you bear it!"

"I think you are strangers," young Dey replied, always with the laugh which defended him from sympathy. "Only strangers would ask that. We have no alternative."

"Yes," said the elderly man, "we are strangers. But we have come to learn, and we are learning," he added, "very fast."

As he spoke his eye rested, as if involuntarily, upon a leather kit-bag at the end of the carriage, and Bepin's took the hint and travelled with it. On the side of the bag was painted in white letters the name "Vulcan Mills." Upon that Bepin's eye stopped, magnetised, and when their glances met again the owner of the bag became aware that he had effected his sudden, enthusiastic, and amazed recognition.

The Bengali's face had changed. Its indifference fell from it like a mask; a moved gentleness flooded it, and the large soft dark eyes that Joan had been thinking like a wild creature's in their restlessness looked suddenly larger with tears. His lips trembled with I know not what suitable apostrophe, but all he found

to say was, "Oh, sir, we—we have been waiting for you!"

"Well," replied Vulcan Mills, with a touch of solemnity, "I have come."

"I did not know, sir, that you were so near Calcutta. This is indeed a propitious event for us. The newspapers said——"

"The newspapers are a little off the scent," said Mr. Mills, smiling. "They had me sight-seeing, and it was my intention to do some small amount of it. But I was not twenty-four hours in the country before I realised that it was little better than a waste of time. It wasn't the dead past I wanted, but the living present. So I made up my mind at Lucknow—what is Lucknow but an unhappy memory?—to come straight to Calcutta, which seems to be your chief theatre of events just now. We left the mail train at Benares—I could not pass a city so sacred to the heart of every Indian—and spent an hour contemplating that wonderful scene of purification by the river Ganges. As I looked at the emaciated faces of old men brought, we are told, to die there by the river, I said to myself, 'How much of religion the East has to teach the West!' I was much impressed there—much impressed. Then we took this slow passenger train for Calcutta. It seems to be running on time."

Bepin listened, his body respectfully inclined, his gaze luminous, as if every word dropped golden.

"But, sir, we were preparing an ovation for you there. I was returning early to assist in that! A large number of the nobility and gentry desired to welcome you on your arrival."

Vulcan Mills stroked his beard and shook his head.

"Nobility and gentry are not much in my line," he

said. "The mill-hands and miners now, or the agricultural labourers—do they know I am coming?"

"Yes, sir, it is nobly said. But" — Bepin hesitated, and his glance went through the window at the travelling landscape, in which three agricultural labourers, each with his rag of loin-cloth, dibbled in a rice-field the size of a small drawing-room—"the agricultural labourer in this country is deficient in education, and does not read the public press," he apologised.

"Ah, well, we must see what can be done for him. I understand you have two hundred million tillers of the soil in India. An enormous preponderance," mused Mr. Mills, "when they do come to the polls."

Bepin clasped his hands.

"Oh, sir, you have come to emancipate our country!"

"No, no! No, no!" returned Mills, with recollection of the snare of political promises. "Only to do what is humanly possible. But this I don't mind saying—my heart has been with you for a long time. And now, if I may ask, what might your name be?"

With a look of deep gratification Bepin produced his card.

"Oh, indeed?" said Vulcan Mills, scrutinising it through his spectacles. "Well now, Mr. Dey, I think I was told to look out for you too. Let me introduce my daughter."

CHAPTER II

VULCAN MILLS had been described by a supercilious pen in a halfpenny newspaper as "the romance of the British proletariat;" and perhaps it would be hard for pens that have no wish to be supercilious to find a better name for him. The inspired weaver, as he was also called, was not merely their romance in the matter of his political position, though I dare say that was what the publicist was thinking of. He stood for their actual and private emotions; he was their larger heart, and with a tongue that did not stumble he celebrated that which they desired to believe. If he went for fortifying to persons they knew nothing about, he returned with a more convincing emphasis and a brighter hope; and they never thought of weighing his plain and faithful devotion against any doubt of the soundness of his views. To many of his constituents in Further Angus he was the play and the lecture and all the humanities together. They gathered round him to have their hopes stirred and their imaginations quickened, and went away more solid than ever to send him to vote for them upon bills for the better administration of Ireland, or measures involving the defence of the Empire. He never faltered in the ideals he had, as it were, undertaken on their behalf; and as his social proposals were still very far from serious consideration or practical test by the Commonwealth, he could hold them up with every happy advantage. He sat earnestly at Westminster

with his feet upon the floor and his policy in the clouds ; and every time he spoke the millennium came nearer in the eyes of Further Angus. Pending its realisation he did spade-work on committees upon labour questions, which was generally admitted to be useful. His own millennium arrived earlier, when an admirer died and left him four hundred a year, thus placing his political principles beyond all material considerations for life. To complete the romance it was only necessary that Joan should grow up clever enough to help him, and good-looking enough to be photographed in the newspapers ; and that happened too.

He had lived long among them, brothers of the bobbin and shuttle ; and the only unpopular thing he ever did was to marry his wife. She was the daughter of one of their own Wesleyan ministers ; and though she stepped down to a cottage with unequivocal intention, she brought some of her superiority with her, and never ceased to try to order their lives for them while she lived. She died when Joan was about seven, sadly regretting that she had been able to do little more than teach the child to read. Vulcan mourned her deeply, and never took another wife ; but voters whose memory cast lightly back over twenty years often said that he only began to "come for'rard" a year or two after this event had placed him, so to speak, more plainly in the public eye.

At last, however, he was very much in the public eye ; with Joan in a corner of the picture. Everybody in England knew his whereabouts the morning after his arrival in Calcutta, and a great many people in other parts of the world. Calcutta itself was taking it in, with Calcutta's own lofty indifference, before Mr. Vulcan Mills and his daughter had come down to breakfast at the Grand Hotel.

"I see your friend Mills has arrived," said Michael Foley to his wife on an upper verandah of their house in Camac Street, where they were having the early tea so dear to India. It was an exquisitely soft, bright October morning of the opening cold weather. The air was full of distant, delicate sound ; and nearer a couple of crows, perched upon the balustrade, conferred brazenly about the chances of toast from the tray.

"You needn't say 'my friend Mills,'" retorted Mrs. Foley, peeling a banana, "I never saw him. Joan is my friend, or used to be, at Girton."

"Well, if she's anything like that last extraordinary female——"

"She isn't like any other extraordinary female. Her extraordinariness is entirely her own."

"I see," returned Mr. Foley without enthusiasm. Lucy threw the banana-peeling to one of the crows, which swooped down upon it, flew with it to a neighbouring tree, dropped it, and came back complaining.

"If you encourage these brutes," continued her husband behind the newspaper, "I shall be obliged to shoot them. Get out, you old reprobate!" and he kicked his slipper at the nearest. They flew off with reproachful caws, circled about and were back before Mrs. Foley had trailed across in her dressing-gown, picked up the slipper and replaced it on her husband's foot.

"I wonder what he stands for in the House—Mills," Foley went on. "Twenty-five or thirty votes, I dare say, when he can get his State Socialists together, though he isn't as sure of them as he used to be. Those fellows that call themselves Practical Socialists won't always follow him, and some of the bigger Trades Unions are sick to death of him. However, the Baboos don't know that, and they'll expect great things of him."

"Will he do any harm, do you think?" asked Mrs. Foley.

"He'll do all the harm he can. He pledged himself to that before he started. The New India Club gave him a dinner in London and he told them how their wrongs appealed to him, and how he meant to find out all about it, and how he'd hate a bureaucracy himself. It was duly telegraphed, and all the native papers have been buzzing with it ever since. A man like Mills, you see, is out for the cause of the people—any cause and any people. At home he represents a tendency which can be taken into account with any other; but in a place like this, where things are rigid, he's bound to do harm."

"Joan used to worship her father," said Mrs. Foley.

"Oh, the man is a force in his way. He has heart and eloquence, of a sort, and he's quite honest. The people like him too, because he's never climbed on their shoulders into a silk hat and a frock coat—never put on any sort of airs. The inspired weaver he began, and the inspired weaver he seems quite content to remain."

"He sent Joan to Girton."

"Well, they could sympathise with that. Why shouldn't he make a lady of her? You'll find his constituents are inordinately proud of Joan, and would chortle to see her marry a baronet. In a manner, you see, she's daughter to all of them."

"I think they do like her," said Mrs. Foley. "She often speaks at meetings, and she's a great leader of the women's movement, you know, in those parts."

"*Suffragette?*" asked her husband, with a face aghast.

"Rather!" Mrs. Foley laughed aloud. "Didn't I tell you? She's been to jail twice! Oh, Joan's been living the strenuous life these five years, while I've been

sitting under a punkah in Lower Bengal, engaged in being married to you! But I confess I didn't know myself till she wrote to me the other day. It shows how far away one is, doesn't it, not knowing when one's friends have been to jail?"

"She should be asked to lecture to the zenana ladies on 'How I battered the policemen!'" said Foley.

"I wonder if they would believe her! I don't think Joan did anything very undignified," replied Mrs. Foley thoughtfully. "She used to be rather a stately sort of girl—tall and dark, and good-looking really."

"Why 'good-looking really'? Why not good-looking simply?"

"Well, you had to discover it. But once you had discovered it you were sure. I used to adore Joan; but I never could get any letters out of her. She was the kind of girl whose birthday you always remembered and who never remembered yours. I don't mean that she was in any way horrid, but it was just the kind of thing that never came into her mind. I am simply wild to see her again, and I'd love to have her here, if it weren't for——"

"Vulcan."

"You think it's absolutely impossible?"

"Absolutely, old girl. Mills is bound to give trouble, and I might any day be invited to prosecute my own guest. Both of them, likely enough, from what you tell me of the young woman."

Mr. Foley was Standing Counsel to the Government of Bengal.

"It wouldn't be safe; though I must say nobody seems in the least exercised about him at present. I was talking to Sir Matthew last night, while you were

flirting in that open manner with the Chief Justice. 'I suppose somebody will be told off to keep him straight, sir,' I said. 'Not by me,' he said. 'I've got nobody to spare. My fellows can't undertake to dry nurse the British operative on a holiday,' he said. 'Too much to do.' I gathered he didn't propose to bother his head ;" and Mr. Foley finished his tea.

"I don't believe they'll go near Sir Matthew, or the Viceroy either," Lucy told him. "Joan wrote that they had strictly avoided official introductions. They wanted to see through the eyes of the people," she said.

"Precisely. They want to see what they've come to look for. Well, they'll see it all right. The point is whether Mills will keep his indignant mouth shut till he gets home again, or whether he'll let himself go out here."

"I thought you said he wouldn't be allowed to hold any public meetings ?"

"Political meetings have been prohibited here for the last six weeks. But I don't know how they're going to prevent a fellow like Vulcan Mills talking, if he wants to. I don't seem to see old McNab giving six months to a party leader in the House of Commons. By the way, in case Miss Mills desires to provoke the penalty of the law in India, you'd better give her to understand that the best accommodation we can offer her isn't anything like up to Holloway."

Mrs. Foley smiled. "I *wonder* what Joan will do," she said.

"Besides, there are always the newspapers," Michael went on. "They'll interview him fast enough. And, of course, there'll be no holding him about the application of the Act to Calcutta."

"The application of what Act ?"

"The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act. I've just been telling you."

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Foley.

"We're getting the benefit of it here for the first time—none too soon either. Sir Matthew hated asking—postponed and postponed. Told me himself it was putting the province in a strait-waistcoat, and he meant to resist it as long as possible. But when it came to that rush on St. John's Church, and the row that finished poor Cunningham and two of his Inspectors, he had to give in."

"I was anxious while those riots were going on, Michael," said Mrs. Foley, who had just returned from convalescing in a hill station. "I all but came down. If it hadn't been for your telegram——"

"Just as well you didn't. Even for ladies the place wasn't pleasant at that time. Mrs. Stairs, you know, was knocked off her horse in the bazar between this and Tollygunge."

"Yes, I saw that. But when you wrote that you had joined the Calcutta Light Horse, dear, I somehow—didn't like it."

Foley laughed. "It's doing me all the good in the world," he said, "and I don't think we'll be told to charge the populace yet awhile."

But he was silent for just a perceptible instant while his eye rested speculatively on the tops of the palms in his neighbour's garden. Then he picked up his newspaper in a way that changed the subject.

Lucy allowed it to be changed. Drumming on the arms of her cane chair, she too looked happily at the palm trees, which stirred pleasantly in the fresh north wind of the cold weather, and let her husband read his newspaper in silence.

"Well—Michael," she said at length, "I'll see Joan this morning, you know. I thought I'd dash round to the Grand after breakfast. I'll drive you to Court in the victoria if you like and send the cart in the afternoon. And when shall we have them to dine?"

"You know best. I would suggest some evening we're at home."

"Don't be an idiot. To-morrow we go to the General, and on Monday to those people in Park Street. On Tuesday, you have some meeting, and on Wednesday we've got the Archdeacon and various suitables. I don't think Wednesday would do. Thursday is free. Shall we say Thursday? It's the father I'm thinking of. I can easily arrange drives and things with Joan before that."

"Thursday, by all means. What about getting people to meet them?" said her husband.

"Just what I was going to ask you. What sort of people do you think? Official—commercial—military? I thought—"

"What did you think?"

"Well, I thought just human beings, you know!"

"Sound. But won't it be rather a small party?"

"They'll like that better. We can ask John."

"No demagogue could meet a better man."

"And I thought perhaps it would be interesting to have Janaki, if I can get her."

"Interesting for Janaki."

"Don't make scandalous suggestions. Interesting for everybody."

"Well—John and Janaki. Does that exhaust them?"

"Does that exhaust them?"

"The human beings."

"It's so early in the season," complained Mrs. Foley. "Why do people arrive from England in October? There's the Bishop, but he's away. And besides — demagogues and bishops—— And the Denisons are still on tour. There's young Macpherson—he's nice."

"Many Macphersons are nice. Which Macpherson?"

"Duncan Macpherson."

"More precise, please. Which Duncan Macpherson?"

"You know perfectly well—the nice one."

"If you mean the indigo Macpherson I admit he's nice, but he's in hospital. If you mean the Under-Secretary, he's gone home."

"Then," said Mrs. Foley impartially, "it must be just John and Janaki. And you are informed that your bath is ready."

CHAPTER III

MICHAEL FOLEY was right in thinking that the somewhat astringent remedy for sedition which Bengal had just swallowed, would excite an active sympathy in Vulcan Mills. It was the Act, the application of the Act, that had finally decided him to make the Oriental tour that had hung so long on the fringe of his intentions. He often said that he "could not remember the time" when he had not felt drawn to India. A free-thinker at eighteen—very free at eighteen, and later on I regret to say he converted his wife—his interest owed nothing to the missionaries, but it had been often reinforced by the copy of Chambers' Encyclopædia which he bought long before he thought he could afford to marry. He went almost at a bound from the Encyclopædia to Max Müller; but he had always been fond of books about the early periods, the beliefs, and the social life of the people. He knew many of the precepts of Manu and a good deal about the Court of Baber. It often struck him as curious how much less absorbing he found the modern history of the country. One might say that its interest ceased for him with the arrival of John Company.

In the House, modesty prevented his raising his voice upon an Indian topic unless the issue struck him as so simply humanitarian that no lover of his kind, black or white, could be expected to keep silence; but

he always sat through such debates, lending a strained attention. Once he attended a meeting of the Oriental Society in Albemarle Street, taking some pains to obtain a ticket. The subject was one of current importance, and he could not deny a certain recompense for his time; but he found the air unsympathetic, critical, and choking with information. The room was full of Lieutenant-Governors in retirement, and the Foreign Editor of the *Times* was in the chair. He hurried out of his back seat without being recognised, and never went again. Certainly when, in a subject province, a British Government found it necessary to curtail a privilege dear to all freemen, it never occurred to him to wonder what they might think of it in Albemarle Street. He knew what he himself thought of it.

It was hardly worth an inquiry whether Joan agreed with him upon this point. He could always depend upon his girl. He looked up his favourite passages in Mill in the same confident spirit with which another might have turned to his Bible, and the book opened at a luminous text. "J. S. is a bit behind the times, but he never disappoints a man," he said to himself almost as reverently as the other might have reflected about Isaiah, or St. Paul. He did not read far enough to be disappointed.

In the Lobby he found many heads to shake with his own upon the gagging of the people; and one legislator, Sir Philip Marcus, poured out views upon it frothing with grief and indignation. This gentleman was a retired Indian civilian and knew Bengal "like his pocket." His whole career in India had been blended with the hopes and aims of the Bengalis; and he was devoting the remnant of his years, in the House

of Commons, to the same cause that had captured his imagination as Assistant Magistrate at Gwalagunge. Mills recognised him as a person of generous aims and unblemished life, and listened as if to an apostle. Sir Philip was greatly affected. Names, dates, facts, came forth in a torrent; the argument could scarcely carry them all. The ex-civilian longed for the power to shout from the house-tops.

"But if I did," he said, "nobody would listen to me. I am a poor, broken-down old bureaucrat, with no way to the heart of the people of this country. You are the man to appeal to them. Go and see. Come back and tell."

The advice had the additional compliment of coming from a political opponent, for Sir Marcus voted with the Liberals who were out of office, and Mills, as a general thing, with the "Top and Bottom" Government, which was in.

"Now that there's to be no autumn session," he replied, "it's just what I'd made up my mind to do;" and Marcus in great gladness seized his hand and shook it.

"I've precious few friends among the officials out there," continued the ex-civilian, "but I think I can truly say that in the province I have more than I can count. God knows it's no boast," he went on, "when I tell you that I once held the heart of Bengal in the hollow of my hand."

There were tears in his eyes, which he wiped away with his handkerchief, unabashed. He even used the handkerchief as if it gave him pleasure to weep.

"I'll give you letters," he added.

* * * * *

Babu Bepin Behari Dey was not among the persons to whom Sir Philip had given Mr. Mills' letters, but the

ex-civilian had mentioned his name as one of the younger "prophets of the new spirit" whom Mills might meet with advantage.

"I never knew these youngsters," he said. "No doubt they were at school in my time; but they sometimes write to me, and as an old standard-bearer I find their letters wonderfully cheering. I hear they're more violent than the old fellows who used to think I could do something for them, but that's natural—that's natural. We must allow for the *Zeitgeist*."

So it was the most reasonable thing in the world, after their happy encounter in the train, that Bepin should be the first to call upon Mr. Mills at the Grand Hotel in Chowringhee on the morning after their joint arrival. He did not come alone, but waited in the office of the hotel with two other Bengali gentlemen, Mr. Ganendra Thakore and Mr. Jotindra Pal, while their cards were taken up. Vulcan and his daughter were in their sitting-room, he with his pipe, considering the European telegrams in a Calcutta paper, Joan watching from a window the noisy life of the broad Maidan, half common and half park, that stretched before her to the river. She turned eagerly as their servant came in with the cards.

"It is Mr. Dey," she said, looking at them over her father's shoulder. "Where are these gentlemen, Joseph? Why don't you show them up?"

"Native mens," responded Joseph. "Want to see master."

"Ask them to walk up," said Mr. Mills.

"Bengali mens," repeated Joseph. "I think wanting something. I say I think master asleep."

"Bring them here—do you understand?" exclaimed Joan. "We are expecting them."

Vulcan got up and put his pipe in his pocket.

"Just be quick about it," he added, "and mark you—the fewer lies you tell on my account the better I'll be pleased, d'ye see?"

"Master giving salaam? Then I give it," said Joseph with alacrity, and closed the door.

"Now, father," said Joan, smiling at him as they waited, "the crusade begins."

I think they made courageous figures standing there in the mantle of their ignorance and the fire of their enthusiasm, with their eyes on the door and their banner between them, waiting for the crusade to begin.

CHAPTER IV

“**B**UT disloil—*that* we are not,” said Mr. Jotindra Pal.

Vulcan Mills brought his tilted chair down upon its four legs with a click.

“Then,” he said, “all I can say is, I am surprised to hear it. After what my eyes have seen in this country, after what my ears have heard, after what you tell me now—I am surprised to hear it.”

Mr. Pal smiled with parted lips, a gentle gratified smile, lustrous and deprecating. His face was very fat, his teeth very white, his eyes very soft. His only unsatisfactory feature was his nose, which had little form and no comeliness. He had the dignity of opulence and corpulence; and the hand which usually lay, with the fingers spread, upon the most obvious part of his person, was moulded with classical beauty. He lifted it now and waved it, with the fingers further spread, as if to put away the force of Mr. Mills' remark.

“They *mean* well,” he said with conciliation and a puckered brow. “Government *mean* well. We know that. Poor fellas!”

“*Mean* well, Mr. Pal! With famine stalking the land and pestilence following after! With the people groaning under the most corrupt and oppressive police known to modern civilisation! With the masses still sunk in—in their primitive ignorance, and the educated

classes debarred from any voice in the affairs of their own country ! ”

“That *cannot* be gainsaid,” acquiesced Mr. Pal, sadly. “Things are very bad. Things are *very* bad.”

“Very bad,” repeated the critic of his country, with a heavy shake of his head.

“Sir,” said Jotindra, “they ask us to live by taking in each other’s washing.”

No gleam was in the eye that Mills turned upon him.

“You won’t find that pay,” he replied.

“All these things that you speak of,” put in Mr. Ganendra Thakore, “we could bear. We could recognise them as momentary difficulties in the progress of our race, which will disappear——”

“At the wish of the Almighty,” said Mr. Pal, and waved his hand again.

“Under constitutional agitation,” completed Mr. Thakore, “which has ever been the flag of Bengal. But now, how agitate? They have closed our mouths, and darkened our counsels, and forbidden our gathering together——”

“Oh, represent it, sir, to our gracious Sovereign,” urged Mr. Pal.

Ganendra smiled indulgently at his companion. Whatever Mr. Pal thought, it was clear that Mr. Thakore was under no illusion as to the province of a Socialist Leader in respect to his Sovereign. His indeed was not the face to chaperone mistakes of any sort. It was the face of an old man, thin, monastic, and acute, delicately and supremely modelled to be a perfect symbol of intelligence. An expression of curious control was about the mouth, greater control than the ordinary human experience would seem to require. The sunken eyes,

too, were gentle; the short black hair, cropped like a European's, was turning to grey about the temples. It was the face of a man well acquainted with the theory of affairs, whose private life had little to do with them. It was a face attended by an obsession, an obsession served by the very soul of the man; his eyes held the shadow of the wings of it, even while he looked at Vulcan Mills. A faint, fresh scent of sacramental oil came from his person as he sat, near and remote, huddled in his chair, with his chudder thrown togawise over his shoulder, coughing sharply now and then, and talking of constitutional agitation.

"Agitate," said Vulcan Mills to him. "Agitate. It is my first word to you, and I foresee it will be my last. Agitate every way you know. We—your brothers in England—are oppressed by class domination there just as you are here, but we have found that we can shake it by agitation. The people must govern themselves. That is the proclamation of the twentieth century. Not in England, not in America only, but in every cursed Dependency and emasculated Crown Colony on the face of the earth. But the people must agitate. It is the only way."

"Sir, you speak like a god," said Jotindra Pal, and wiped his forehead.

"The people must govern themselves," repeated Ganendra. "Yes, that message has been delivered to me also."

He looked at Vulcan Mills through half-closed eyes, a re-measuring look, as if to make quite sure, and added—

"Badly, if you will. I don't know whether you will agree with me in thinking that the worst home rule is better for a people than the best foreign rule?"

Still watching he added, "I will go further, and say that the better a government by foreigners the more demoralising it is to the subject race. It is my brief," he finished smiling, "against the British administration in this country."

Mr. Pal looked in affectionate appeal from one to the other. Mills brought his hand down upon his knee.

"It's arguable," he said. "It's arguable, at any rate. But why should we suppose that after all these years of the Western model, the government of India by the Indians should be so bad?"

"I fear it is because of the Western model," Ganendra smiled again. "It is foreign to the genius of the country, and we are not like the Japanese; we do not imitate well. However," he checked himself, "the Western model is with us now, and we must follow. We ourselves would be content with nothing else. But—" he paused for an instant and emotion gathered upon his lip.

"Give us back our Mother, and we shall not trouble about the fashion of her dress," he said gently.

"Have your ever, sir, been forcibly separated from your mother?" asked Jotindra.

"I never had one," replied Vulcan Mills, with an interrogative eye that ignored Mr. Pal, and rested upon his companion.

"No mother, and no gods, I think," said Ganendra, as from another star.

It was the accidental escaping spark of an infinite contempt. Jotindra looked frightened. But it did no harm in the beard of Vulcan Mills, who took it as he might have done a fencing speech by a political hostess.

"No mother and no gods," he repeated jovially. "Never mind about that. But tell me now, as man to

man, what were the events that led to putting this Act in force in Calcutta? I know, of course, what the officials say. That is, I know practically what the Under-Secretary for India told us in the House and no more. I've asked here and there for further information; but my experience of the bureaucrat of this country is that he either shuts up like an oyster, or repeats himself like a crow."

Jotindra shook with grateful laughter. Ganendra Thakore smiled politely, and again, as he gathered up his mind to reply, his glance narrowed itself to an estimate of Mills.

"Now," said Joan to Bepin, on the other side of the room. "I must listen."

The young man, for his part, had been doing his best, from where they sat, not to miss the conversation of the others. Joan had taken charge of him when they came in, and had given him a seat where he and she could talk independently. She had a hundred violent questions to ask him, a hundred assurances to give him that there were more important things in the world than the petty status of his social oppressors, that friendships—English friendships—admiration and success were all easily possible to him without waiting even for that golden dawn that was coming for the whole human race. But she could not quite capture his interest. He looked at her respectfully and made conventional replies, while his eyes wandered to her father; and once, while Ganendra was speaking, he half lifted his hand in an involuntary appeal for silence. Joan saw then, with surprise, a look of devout and adoring attention that was new to her in the history of the human face. She caught eagerly at the explanation of it in the young man's word of apology.

"For me," he said to her awkwardly with glistening eyes, "that gentleman is the Master—what you would call religious guide. I love him very much."

"Is he an ascetic?" asked Joan.

"Oh, he has practised Yoga since youth. He is very strict—very austere."

"And you are his disciple? I've heard of such things."

"Ye-es—disciple. But I am what we call *dunniadar*—worldly man. I can never hope to be like him. He lives only for God, and for the Mother."

"For the Mother?"

"For India."

"Oh, yes—the mother-land. I understand," said Joan.

"To us she is the Mother," Bepin told her. "It is the language of the heart. If it were not for her I think Sri Ganendra would be altogether holy man—recluse. But our Mother calls him."

As Joan's eyes sought his face Ganendra Thakore looked elsewhere, but not before she had caught a ray of benevolence, distinct and gentle, in the glance that rested upon her.

"He looks a dear," she said impulsively, and the young Bengali's air, for a moment, was half offended.

But while Joan talked with Bepin it was to the older man that the impression of her travelled, past, as it were, the inattentive ears and the wandering mind of the younger. More than once Ganendra considered her as she pursued her eager endeavour, and once his eyes rested thoughtfully and kindly upon Bepin also.

The cathedral clock on the Maidan chimed four quarters and struck twelve before the three Indian gentlemen rose to take their leave. Ganendra had

pressed many matters, with a dignity and an eloquence that charmed them all into a listening group. Even Mills himself now and then suspended the shrewd question that would have broken the flow of speech, impassioned yet restrained, that was giving to the whole political grievance of the country an aspect so subtle, so seizing, and so philosophical ; scribbling it hastily into his note-book instead, to be asked at another time.

Upon one point the Socialist Leader was firm ; he would address, for the present, no public meetings. No doubt, as his visitors urged, permission would be accorded ; it could hardly be refused. But Vulcan told them shrewdly that he had come to learn. He must form opinions before he could express them. Their faces fell, but they agreed.

A number of appointments were nevertheless made, for gatherings in honour of Mr. Mills, and arrangements by which he should see for himself the abuses under which the people groaned. Joan put them down, and Bepin told her how to spell the proper names.

"My daughter is the keeper of my conscience in these matters," Mr. Mills was explaining to Mr. Jotindra Pal, who received the statement in speechless deference, when Joseph opened the door to admit Mrs. Michael Foley.

"One memsahib coming," said Joseph, and effaced himself.

Mrs. Foley hesitated for an instant and then advanced gaily with outstretched hand.

"Dear Joan—this *is* nice!" she said. "Here you really are ! Please introduce me to your father. I hope you have some idea of who I am, and why I take you by storm like this, Mr. Mills !" she added, as Vulcan somewhat impassively extended his hand ; and with a

half bow she acknowledged the presence of the native gentlemen, who stood as if petrified in the formalities of departure.

"I was aware that my daughter had a friend married in Calcutta that she was looking forward to see," said Mills. "But you must let me introduce you to these gentlemen, since you don't seem to know each other. This is Mr. Pal—Mrs. Foley ; and this is Mr. Thakore—Mrs. Foley—and this again is Mr. Dey. Now why should you hurry away, friends, just as a lady joins us? I'm afraid she'll take that as a very poor compliment."

Mrs. Foley acknowledged the introduction with grace and charm, and shook the hand of Mr. Pal, who stretched it out as if by accident, and stood abashed while the civility accomplished itself. But they all, after a moment of embarrassed indecision, did hurry away, without attempting to cope with the pleasantries of Vulcan, who sat down again seriously, and considered the remaining visitor with reserve. As the door closed Mrs. Foley sprang up.

"*Now* let me kiss you, Joan," she exclaimed.

"You have hardly changed at all, Lucy," Joan told her as they embraced.

"Oh, I've had a lot of the hills. Michael bundles me off. And one gets fearfully fit convalescing after enteric."

"That is a disease that is very prevalent in this country, I understand," observed Vulcan ; and Joan, less non-committal, said she had been sorry.

The moment had its palpable discomfort. Lucy complained to her husband afterwards that the two might have been looking at her from the other side of a gulf. The warm-hearted little lady was receiving, in her friendly person, the first volley of criticism of her

class and traditions that Vulcan and his daughter had had so intimate an opportunity of discharging; and that criticism was too strong in them both, in spite of the claims of friendship, not to escape them and stand wordless in the air. They could not instantly divorce her from all that so demanded impeachment in their belief; and Joan's eyes were tragic with the questions she longed to ask.

"If I had not known there were things I could depend on in Joan," Lucy said to her husband, "I wouldn't have stayed five minutes. It was simply too ridiculous."

But there were things, and Mrs. Foley stayed at least twenty.

"We talked about the voyage, but even there I didn't feel safe, out of the Mediterranean," she told Michael. "The old man said he was sorry to pass the Egyptian Question in the Canal, and looked as revolutionary as possible."

A little talk of remembered things did more than the voyage to put Lucy on her old footing with her friend, and then it was time to arrange for other meetings.

"We are hoping so much that you will both dine on Thursday," said Mrs. Foley.

"We're very much obliged to you," Vulcan told her. "But——"

"Oh, please don't say 'but,' Mr. Mills. We are asking a very interesting and delightful na—Indian lady to meet you—very advanced—the Rani Janaki. You must come."

Vulcan looked at his daughter.

"Don't say you are engaged, Joan," cried Mrs. Foley.

"No. We're not engaged," said Joan.

"And what time will you give me for my very own?" Lucy asked her. "For a good long talk. Will you lunch with me to-morrow?"

"To-morrow we are to meet Mr. Lal Mohun Das at the hall of the Awakened Indians."

"And there is to be a collation," said Mr. Mills, "at one o'clock."

"Could you let me take you for a drive on Tuesday afternoon?"

"On Tuesday afternoon," said Joan, consulting her diary, "father visits the National School in Chitpore with Mr. Ganendra Thakore and Mr. Dey."

"But you?"

"Oh, I go with him."

"Then Wednesday."

"On Wednesday we are engaged to Mr. Jotindra Pal. He is to take us to his garden-house, and I am to meet the ladies of his family."

Mrs. Foley bit her lip. "Let us come back to Monday," she said. "Really, Joan, you must give me a look in somewhere. I'll call for you on Monday afternoon, and show you Calcutta."

"Monday is free," said Joan, smiling. "But, dear girl—it's the real Calcutta, you know, that I want to see."

Upon this declaration Joseph again opened the door, and put in an unambiguous head.

"Seven more native mens," he announced.

"Then good-bye," said Mrs. Foley hurriedly. "Good-bye for now," and abandoned the position, Joseph, with a look of real solicitude, effacing himself against the door to let her pass.

CHAPTER V

THERE was a time, still fresh in the memory of senior pleaders and permanent officers of the Crown, when Kristodas Mukerji, one of the ablest and most respected judges of the High Court of Calcutta, was also one of the strictest and most ascetic leaders of the Brahmin community. He came of a line of pundits and poets, with more than one collateral saint, a family constantly noted for religious achievement. A flatterer told him, when he arrived at the Bench of the High Court, that he united in his person the honours of the Government and of Heaven. This was probably as true as such a sweeping compliment could be. He was famous for charity, gentleness, and austerity ; no beggar was ever turned from his door, and no rule of his priestly order was ever broken within his gates.

Kristodas was alone in the world but for an adopted heir and one daughter. He had married Janaki at six, under the best auspices and the highest sanctions, to the son of a titled landowner and old friend, but the little girl was a widow a year after, having paid but one shy and formal visit to her husband's father's house.

"We will console one another," said Kristodas tenderly, and himself taught her to pray for the spirit of the dead boy to whom she belonged and must ever belong. The child had never left her father's house, and so escaped her life as it might have been under the eye of her husband's relations ; but Kristodas, as she came into

her teens, allowed no laxity in her widow's ritual. In dress, diet, and duties Janaki was a model in little of her melancholy sort. In compensation he cultivated her mind. She wore no jewels, but she could read an English newspaper and write a Persian poem. She lived on one cooked meal a day, but she could have set a Lieutenant-Governor right on a point of Hindu inheritance.

Janaki was fifteen, large-eyed, solemn, and tall for a Bengali girl, as devoted to the soul of her husband, as obedient to the law of her caste and creed, as any other atom to the rule of the universe, when her father, as a Hindu, began to suffer and show signs of change. His duties made a public man of him, and his intelligence, in that exposure, could not escape the spirit of the age. About this time, moreover, he was invited to examine and report upon the judicial aspects of a certain important administrative reform. He went upon special duty to that end for six months ; and when he had finished, or soon after, an appreciative Government made a knight of him. The Viceroy could not use his Christian sword for the purpose ; but his hand was free of tradition, and one might say that he invested the coat-collar of Sir Kristodas Mukerji, K.C.I.E. How far this influenced Kristodas, who knows ? We are all human, and a Hindu knight is a comparatively new thing, to which perhaps he had to reconcile himself. At all events, about the time of his return to the Bench, it was noticed by his friends that he had more than ever altered. He still, it was said, bathed in Ganges water, but it was brought to his bathroom ; he no longer walked every morning at sunrise to the ghat at the river. Rites were curtailed in his house, and the *shalgram* * gradually found its way to an upper shelf in his library, where it was flanked by Spencer on

* Ammonite fossil used as symbol of Vishnu.

one side and Mill on the other. He, who would formally purify himself after shaking hands with an Englishman, presently dined at their tables, soon smoked their cheroots, finally drank their champagne. Presently he abandoned his orthodox family in its orthodox family hive in North Calcutta, and bought the pillared palace of a wealthy Armenian in the European quarter, where he and Janaki settled down alone, with a troop of servants, to English ways of living. His relatives made compromises toward him according to the strength of their convictions. Few of them would eat with him, but nearly all paid him formal visits. After all, he was the family's most distinguished representative.

While he made no special explanation of his personal habits, as time went on he gave out without reserve that he had liberalised his whole religious position, especially on the social side, and was now to be counted among the friends of reform. He even published a book upon "The Future of Caste," which was too philosophic to be very progressive, but which drew a mournful picture of what might be expected to happen if progress was not made.

But a widowed daughter was a more serious matter than a published opinion of any kind. In the new enlightenment the Hindu widow had no place—at all events, the Hindu widow of fifteen, who had lost her spouse at seven. Such hardships were a blot upon civilisation, such fates a danger to morality, a more obvious reproach than the caste system. Sir Kristodas was even president of a society which specified the child widow.

Here, then, was a reformer with a perpetual reminder that social progress starts from the hearthstone. Sir Kristodas's duty, from his new point of view, was very

plain before him. He ought to present a bold front to society, and marry Janaki again. Nor did he shirk it. A youth was found, with some difficulty, belonging to a respectable impoverished Brahmin family which still clung to half a dozen hereditary cocoanut trees in a village of Dacca, whose people would consent to receive her on condition that her father paid half a lakh down, arranged to carry through her husband's University education, and undertook to obtain a Government post for him when he graduated. To permit marriage with a widow was to sail very near damnation ; but, after all, times were changing, and Sir Kristodas had obtained the approval of at least two distinguished ecclesiastics, who pointed out that though man thought it wrong, the Shastras, in one or two places, thought it right. And in this case, at all events, they, the ecclesiastics, were willing to back up the Shastras. Besides, the youth had failed three times to matriculate : he was not, in truth, very bright. Education, above all things, was essential—education with damnation if unobtainable otherwise, but in any case a B.A. degree of Calcutta University. One might hope that the damnation would be temporary, and that a degree would be considered at Heaven's gates * * *

Sir Kristodas took a great deal of trouble, and the sacrifice which he prepared to his daughter's happiness and his own consistency was considerable. It met, however, with opposition of a peculiarly distressing and effective kind.

"I should be no better than a harlot," Janaki told him, with covered face and miserable eyes, when the scheme was revealed to her. It was only what he had himself taught her, but Kristodas was shocked. The family guru concealed a ray of satisfaction, and was

shocked also. They laboured together to disabuse the girl—only fifteen and already mistress of such strong terms. But Janaki was obdurate and most insensible to the claims of progress.

"Do you wish to make Englishwoman of me, oh my father?" she asked bitterly.

"Truly the English have the wise and right custom that their widows marry again, even when they are the mothers of children," said her father. "Forget not obedience, my daughter."

Janaki threw back her *sari* from her face, and dashed the tears hopefully from her eyes.

"Then I will be Englishwoman, oh my father, wise and beloved," she said, "and I will marry, as the English do, according to my desire. I will seek my own husband as the Englishwomen do," she went on with downcast eyes, "and you shall then give the command for me to marry. But not one whom I have not seen as the son of this Chaudri, for so the English never do."

The priest gave her a shrewd glance of appreciation. So young, and so crafty in virtue! She was a credit to him.

"It is reasonably said," he told Sir Kristodas.

And in the end, because of the support of the guru, and the indignant assistance of her own grandmother, who was equally opposed to innovations, Janaki prevailed. That is to say she prevailed as regards the son of Chaudri, with whom negotiations were fortunately still in an early stage. But Sir Kristodas found another way of holding her to her argument and removing her as a stumbling-block. He proposed that she should go to England to be educated, and to this compromise he won her consent with comparatively little difficulty; she was even then eager about things of the mind. She

fell into the family of a Radical don of Oxford, where for five years she was treated with indignant pity and taught to think politically. Mr. Sidney Gray placed in her hand the latest flag of applied democracy, and Mrs. Gray made the most of her at afternoon teas as an Indian princess. She was also led, as it were, to see some absurdity in her career as a Hindu widow, so that she stood intellectually quite outside herself in that capacity. Her widowhood shrank into the core of her being; it was thought kinder not to remind her of it; and so clever and charming a person grew up round it that in the end she herself hardly knew it was there.

When Janaki was twenty, Sir Kristodas sent for her, a little in a hurry. She had been very happily out of the path of progress, and he had every reason to be satisfied with the development of her mind; but a note had begun to creep into her letters which made him uncomfortable. He himself had never found it convenient to visit England; he was scarcely aware of the existence of such impartial judges of their country as Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Gray. That criticism of Indian affairs did exist there he could hardly help knowing; but he had never given it a more serious motive than desire to embarrass the Government of the day, or a more important source than the impulses of men like Sir Philip Marcus, whose heart, Kristodas had often said with a smile, was much better than his head. That numbers of voluble and persuasive persons were to be found, who had never been nearer to India than Earl's Court, who did not know a Zakka Khel malik from a Chittagong cook, and who were all ready, nevertheless, to free the country of the British yoke, was a thing that had never occurred to him as a practical proposition.

Sir Kristodas had an intimate personal acquaintance

with the British yoke, and spelled it differently. He also saw it everywhere about him, solid and strong and simple, and would have laughed at the idea that such achievement could withdraw itself, or even question itself. Moreover, Sir Kristodas was an officer of the Crown, and his lean bosom was Conservative both by duty and by instinct. The Crown under Heaven was not to be criticised. When his daughter began to talk about the Crown in a way which seemed to Kristodas inexcusable, he sent for her.

So the Rani Janaki came back at twenty to Calcutta and to the plaster palace in Park Street, full of mirrors within and marigolds without, where for five years her father had lived alone. It was a new Janaki, of course. Sir Kristodas, half expecting his little widow home again, felt a sudden sense of loss, a blankness, as if the little widow had died and left a room empty in his memory. When Janaki knelt with a smile and touched his feet with her head, he was aware that in the act she gracefully dismissed the past; after that they would shake hands. He looked a little dimly at the work of the years in Oxford. Then he recognised with relief that the work of the years was very opportune, that in vexed questions of precedence and table decoration here was somebody who could decide.

From that day Janaki stepped into her revolutionised place as mistress of the plaster palace and scrutineer of her father's social relations, stepped indeed into her father's world as he had re-made it, and was more at ease there than he could ever be. The house succumbed to the ideas of æsthetic Oxford, grew green and white and Jacobean, embellished by reproductions of Italian art Kristodas had never seen, and portraits of distinguished professors he had never met. The

element of surprise disappeared from his dinner parties ; Janaki knew at least whom not to invite. The Calcutta world, uncomfortable as ever in its social relations with "natives," congratulated itself upon an arrival which made them easier, and patronised the daughter of Sir Kristodas with the best intention. Ladies in high official position called her "that charming Miss Mukerji," and declared that it was difficult to remember that she was other than themselves. Her proper designation, when somebody stumbled upon it, improved her charm with a touch of romance ; and while her looks were always arguable, nobody disputed that she had wonderful eyes. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Gray had been devotees of Liberty, and domesticated the bizarre with all the tact of that well-known cult, searching Andalusia and Assyria for their personal adornment. They had made Janaki decorative, without hesitation. And Janaki herself, with the basis of the graceful dress of her sect, had drawn something of applied æsthetics from Mrs. Gray's shudders and Mrs. Gray's approvals, and wove it in with Oriental colours that became her better than they did Mrs. Gray. The glittering ornaments of the orthodox Rani Janaki remained in the orthodox seclusion of her widowhood ; but her successor invented much more beautiful ones, and wore them, uncut or incrusting, with a touch of mystery. This, and other things—she would drive in her father's big barouche chaperoned only by the grooms in the crimson and gold judicial livery—gave scandal to her grandmother and all her Roy relations on her mother's side ; but for Janaki these persons had become less important, and she made a jest of their outcasting her.

"A widow has no caste," she laughed, and went to tea with the wife of the Chief Justice.

"Interesting," the ladies declared her, and the men found her. Often, at a party, she would draw their eyes and their half-fascinated, half-unwilling attention from the women of their own race. John Game was one of the first to find her interesting.

"Excellent friends," he always declared himself and the Rani Janaki. "A delightful girl. It's a privilege to know her."

Seeing how the men would talk with her, their wives would wonder sometimes whether the daughter of Sir Kristodas and some Englishman might not like one another well enough to marry. This speculation never occurred to John Game; and he would have been amazed to learn that the Englishman, in the popular view, might very well be he.

CHAPTER VI

"I AM wondering whether it makes one feel more shy to be announced, or not to be announced," said Joan Mills to Michael Foley, who stood near the chair into which she had just subsided in his wife's drawing-room. She looked in that place like a watchful foreigner. She and her father were the last to arrive, and it was curious the way they stood, so to speak, out of the picture, striking as they both were, with a significance that did not in the least mingle with the meaning of the room, or the others in it. They simply seemed not to respond at any point to the social theory about them, subdued and standardised as it was by conditions very unchanging and very local; they cried out vigorously before they said a word, of other aims and occupations. Sir Kristodas in his little skull-cap, Janaki in her *sari* embroidered with silver pomegranates, looked less alien to the occasion. John Game, who had been waiting with the others for their arrival, seemed curiously impressed. He took an instinctive step or two out of the circle, and stood unnoticed with folded arms, looking at Joan intently. Mrs. Foley had almost to draw him forward to his introduction.

"Only two people are announced in this part of the world," said Foley, "Mr. and Mrs. Viceroy—and as hosts, not as guests. I should say 'heralded.' When the guests are assembled in their scores, a beautiful

young man trimmed with blue enters by another way and loudly exclaims, 'Their Excellencies!'

"And then?" asked Joan.

"Then the band plays 'God save the King,' and we all with one accord fall down flat," laughed Foley.

Joan smiled; but her father with a startled look, said, "Surely that is not the case!"

"Don't believe a word of it, Mr. Mills," said Mrs. Foley. "We stand on our self-respecting feet, and they shake hands with each of us."

"Which is affable of them," said Michael, "when it would be so much less trouble for His Excellency to announce briefly, 'Consider your hands shaken,' and then to turn to the lady he loves best, as I do to Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, and say, 'Shall we go down to dinner, ma'am?'"

"You seem to make a great deal of your Viceroy," observed Vulcan, "and yet he is but a human being, after all."

"Perfectly true, Mr. Mills," cried Mrs. Foley. "Mike, you are much too frivolous; and as usual you have forgotten to tell anybody to take in anybody but yourself! Sir Kristodas, I am going to resign you to Miss Mills. John, will you go down with the Rani? And you and I, Mr. Mills, will take care of one another."

It was not the orthodox allotment, and Janaki lifted her eyes as Game offered his arm, with a sudden star-flash of surprise and pleasure in them. His own responded frankly enough. It was always a matter for congratulation between them to fall to one another at dinner-parties. Then his glance returned to the profile just vanishing, with that of Sir Kristodas, through the drawing-room door. Janaki's followed it.

"Your father is looking very well to-night," said Game, without the least idea that he dissembled. It was the very impenetrable beginning, without form or foreshadowing, and his was a simple soul, not used to suspect itself.

"My father? Yes," replied Janaki, "but he will not be pleased to-night. He does not sympathise with Socialism."

She spoke upon impulse, since hers was not a simple soul and she suspected everything, in that one look, in that one prevarication. She had a measure for John Game's glances at women which had hitherto always brought her comfort and reassurance. This one escaped it, had in it something of a quality she did not know.

"My father is much stronger lately," she added with self-possession that did credit to Oxford, but the dark eyes in the shadow of the silver pomegranates looked startled, and the slender brown hand on Game's arm grew a little cold.

"I can understand everybody else," said Game as they descended, "but why Mrs. Livingstone Hooper?"

The lady's sumptuous shoulders were at that moment negotiating the dining-room door; her precedence had carried her out of ear-shot.

"I know. She would come, Mrs. Foley told me. She wanted to meet the—the celebrity. But perhaps she thought the Commissioner"—Janaki smiled—"would be safer at home."

It was a restoring touch of intimacy and confidence, this undertone on the stairs about their fellow-guests. She rallied happily under it, and her eyes sought his with the pleasantries about the absent Presidency Commissioner, who was a person of notorious discretion.

"Ah," said Game inattentively, and made no other comment.

"I didn't know there was a daughter," he resumed, and his companion did not for an instant imagine that he referred to a daughter of Mrs. Livingstone Hooper.

"Oh yes," she replied, "I was asked for the daughter—a native lady to amuse the daughter."

Game glanced at her with surprise. The intonation of bitterness, covered as it was by a smile of the gentlest, was new in his friend.

"I am sure," he said gravely, "she will be very interested, and very honoured to meet you."

It was intolerable that he should answer for her. Janaki smiled again, even more gently.

"How do you know?" she asked, "when you have not even spoken to her?"

Then, as they had reached their places at the table, she withdrew her hand from his coat-sleeve as if she would never willingly touch it again.

It was a sociable, round table. Just a hint of anxiety might have been detected in Mrs. Foley's eye as to whether it was not, for the present occasion, too sociable and too round. There would be moments, Mrs. Foley divined, when nobody would be able to get away from anybody, when everybody would have to take it, whatever it was. And nobody in the least know what it might be. That came vaguely home to Lucy as she glanced over the oddly assorted group for which she had to feel herself responsible. There was Vulcan Mills, at her elbow, in the black sack coat that was so much better than she expected, the black tie and the grizzled beard. The beard was the thing, somehow, that obscured all else, the thing from which prophetic words might issue at any moment. There

was Joan, suddenly and mysteriously a beauty, ready to prophesy too, no doubt, for all her white satin and the rose in her bosom. There was Sir Kristodas making little uncomfortable pecks at conversation with a new kind of English young lady, and Janaki in one of her silences. There was Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, with all her dignities out, and scrutinising the strangers, as it were, over the top of them; and there was John Game, who was to fuse everybody, unaccountably wrapped up, apparently, in himself. The merest rag of convention covered them; the merest whim to feed held them together; the air was oddly charged and psychic. It seemed to Lucy that the least misadventure—the blowing out of a candle—might send her guests shrieking off in strange combinations or different directions. Vulcan, too, seemed to wait to be spoken to, which made apprehensive work of it. He fixed a serious and preoccupied gaze upon Sir Kristodas, and consumed his soup in silence dotted with bows and monosyllables. Mrs. Livingstone Hooper responded heavily to the pleasantries of her host, with a watchful eye elsewhere, as one who would not be beguiled from the main purpose of the evening. John Game and Janaki, usually on such sympathetic terms, fell apart like halves of an orange. The party seemed to wait for a pronouncement. Was it from Mills? Was it—how ridiculous—from Joan?

“I shall probably remain in the city much longer than I originally intended,” said Vulcan, in response to a question about his plans.

“I may get down Madras way, but I have made up my mind to give up Ceylon altogether, and take more time here.”

For one second Mr. Foley permitted his attention to

wander from the privilege by his side, and it might be said that the Standing Counsel pricked up his ears. "Didn't you hear the fellow say so?" he asked John Game afterwards, and was surprised to be answered in the negative. A man in Game's official position ought to have heard a thing like that.

"Then you find Calcutta interesting?" ventured Lucy.

"Beyond all my expectations."

"The Botanical Gardens are supposed to be good here. There is a wonderful, old, enormous banyan tree with pendant roots like the pillars of a house. Have you been there?"

"I have not."

"We—we must take you. And of course there is Warren Hastings' house in Alipore, and the garden where he fought with Francis. It is used now as a guest-house for native princes. Have you seen that?"

"I have not."

"Madame Grand's portrait is somewhere about. Michael, where is Madame Grand's portrait?"

"Didn't Curzon get hold of it for the Victoria Memorial?" asked her husband.

"And who was Madame Grand?" inquired Vulcan.

"I am afraid I can't tell you who she was originally," said Mrs. Foley, "but she—she lived at that period."

"I passed this morning the house Macaulay lived in," said Vulcan. "One of India's greatest benefactors, I suppose. He well deserved his tablet."

"I am not sure," put in Sir Kristodas with a smile. "You will not find everybody to agree with you there. Macaulay inoculated us with higher education before we had the Board School. He tried to finish what had not been begun. Macaulay and Bentinck gave the Bengalis

cheap intellectual stimulant, and my countrymen take to intellectual stimulant as others do to drink. We have not seen the end of that yet."

Vulcan smiled. "There's a proverb that says we can have too much of a good thing," he said, "and I know only one exception to it. The exception's education."

"We can also show," said John Game, before Sir Kristodas could reply, "the church Thackeray was christened in."

"St. John's," said Joan across the table; "I went there this morning and imagined them walking in with him in his long clothes. I hope it's the same font."

Their eyes met in a smile as she answered him, and Game for a moment did not speak again.

"And of course the Black Hole," continued Lucy. "Thanks to Lord Curzon, any one may see where the Black Hole was now. He put up a monument."

"A very doubtful service to humanity, that," Vulcan told her, adjusting his spectacles as if to combat, and glancing round the table. "Such memories ought to be wiped out rather than perpetuated. Curzon would have done a better job to have destroyed the records, if he could have got hold of them."

"I'm afraid that isn't altogether the local feeling," said Mr. Foley, smiling. "We're rather obliged to him."

"Some of us," contributed Mrs. Livingstone Hooper with sudden majesty, "have rather special reasons for liking to see the Black Hole monument, and realising why it is in our midst. I have, for one."

"And what is that, madam," inquired Vulcan, "if I may ask?"

"My great-great-grand-uncle was smothered there."

"Really, Mrs. Hooper!" dashed in Lucy, "I never knew that!"

"And every time I pass that monument in my evening drive, I look at it gratefully and say to myself, 'Lest we forget!'"

"I am afraid," suddenly put in the Rani Janaki laughing, "that an ancestor of mine, who was a very wicked man, signed the order to smother him! And I agree with you, Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, that these things should be remembered."

"Not at all," said Sir Kristodas, wagging his chin. "Not at all. I am of the opinion of Mr. Mills. I am a man of peace."

"How we still squabble," said Game with an absent smile, "about the mere crumbs of that man's administration! The last of the paternal rulers of India!"

Michael Foley glanced at his guest with just a hint of surprise. Such a glance as might be sent to one of the family who discussed its members a little too freely before strangers. But John Game, looking happily at a salt-cellar, was enjoying a moment of expansion. The silence grew between him and his neighbour; and Joan, glancing curiously from Janaki to Game, reflected, "How she hates the English! She has hardly spoken to the man who has taken her in."

While Janaki, intercepting the glance, looked into her own heart and said, "Already—already she is jealous of me!"

"Calcutta is not supposed to be much of a place for the sight-seer," generalised Mr. Foley. "Interesting things have happened here, but most of them are obliterated. We suffer from alluvial deposit."

"Jute and hides and indigo," said Game, "submerge all the nobler traces."

Joan looked up vividly.

"That sounds cynical enough to be true," she said. "But you have now at all events the most dramatic sight in the world to offer—the spectacle of a nation's awakening."

They were all listening, but instinctively her challenge went to Game, as if he, of them all, was her natural adversary, the mind with whom it would be her business to come to terms. Game was Home Secretary to the Government of the nation that was awakening, but Joan did not know it. Something else settled their antagonism if it was to be that, something that rode on the half-dozen words he had spoken, hardly addressed to her, and established itself when their eyes met.

"Good Lord," groaned Michael Foley into the ear of Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, who paid no attention. Lucy, in her dismay, helped herself liberally to a vegetable she detested, and dropped the spoon.

Game let his eyes rest on Joan, smiling plainly, with the pleasure of looking at her.

"It looks like that, doesn't it?" he said.

"It *is* that, isn't it?"

"They tell me so. I'm not sure that it couldn't be summed up as a religious revival, with Ganendra Thakore doing John Wesley in a Vishnuvite incarnation."

Mrs. Livingstone Hooper looked shocked.

"But John Wesley was a Methodist," she said.

"I know," exclaimed Joan to Game. "The Dharma! 'For the establishment of the national righteousness I am born again and again?'"

"Where does that quotation come from?" demanded Mrs. Hooper of her host.

"The Bhagavad Gita, I think," said Michael. "Ridiculous that she should know it."

"The *what*?"

"With us," Sir Kristodas was saying, "it comes to the same thing. With us, politics are the religion of the body, religion the politics of the soul."

"Where are we?" murmured Michael to Mrs. Hooper, who responded with some irritation, "I'm sure I don't know."

"You know Mr. Thakore, then," said Joan to John Game.

"Very well," he replied, with a touch of ruefulness.

"And what might be your opinion of him?" asked Vulcan.

"Oh, a very clever fellow. Charming personally, dangerous politically, religiously quite mad."

Vulcan grunted.

"What was that story of a son?" asked Foley.

"A very unfortunate one. Ganendra had a son, a boy of some promise, and underwent every sort of privation for years to get him into the Indian Civil. The son went home and passed brilliantly, but failed to get through the riding test, and died, poor chap, of the disappointment. Now, that circumstance will no doubt entirely escape the future historian of Bengal, and yet——"

"And yet?" repeated Joan eagerly.

"It has its importance," said Game briefly.

"I am afraid that poor fellow Ganendra Thakore is very bitter," said Sir Kristodas. "I knew him in the old days thirty years ago, when he used to keep a little school."

"Isn't it generally thought, sir," said Michael Foley, "that he still keeps a little school?"

The Rani Janaki lifted her eyes and let them rest dreamily on Michael for an instant ; then her glance wandered about the room. Her father chuckled, but a little perfunctorily. John Game looked at his plate.

"Who knows?" said Sir Kristodas.

"Now that was a monstrous thing," remarked Vulcan Mills. "To refuse that fine young chap because he couldn't ride to please them. What difference did it make to his heart or his head whether he could ride? I'll be answered, I suppose, in terms of prestige. It's a wonderful fetich, prestige."

Mills blinked through his spectacles at the little company with a smile that was meant to be tolerant and disarming ; but for an instant no one spoke. Then Game, with his shoulder half turned, said to the bowl of flowers in front of him—

"It's indispensable. Two-thirds of a man's work is done in the saddle."

Manners in outlying portions of the King's dominions are not uniformly good, and inexperienced dogmatising persons are not, perhaps, suffered gladly anywhere. The reply was indifferent and very nearly contemptuous. Vulcan took it stolidly, but Joan flushed under the flick of it.

"Are many Englishmen ploughed for riding?" she asked quietly.

"I should think not. Most Englishmen are naturally able to ride."

"As all Englishmen are naturally able to govern."

"Precisely."

There was neither indifference nor contempt in Game's replies in this little duel, but a delight so simple, a satisfaction so rich, that it almost took the note of laughter. Joan said nothing, with obvious difficulty.

The Rani Janaki gently destroyed the verbena leaf in her finger bowl, and Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, suppressed too long, struggled for utterance behind a Carlsbad plum. She was forestalled by Sir Kristodas, who asked Foley whether he had read Sir Philip Marcus's article on Ruling Races in the current *Contemporary*.

"No," said his host. "I suppose he doesn't think much of 'em. But I did read yours about the student danger in Bengal, Sir Kristodas. Very instructive I thought it, if I may say so."

At this Sir Kristodas emitted a little cough of deprecation, under which Mrs. Foley was able hurriedly to effect the diversion of the ladies' retreat, ably seconded by Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, who shook the crumbs of the repast, so to speak, from her person as she rose.

CHAPTER VII

"I KNOW what you're dying to talk about," said Michael Foley to his wife as she appeared in her habit at the door of his library early next morning, "but you'll have to wait till breakfast. I've a heavy brief to get through before then, and another that I shall be obliged to read on my way to Court. Off with you!"

"All right, Mickie—but isn't it exciting?"

"Frightfully exciting. Do clear out."

"I'll try to ride it off," said Lucy. "Put me up, and I'll go without a word."

Two hours later, however, as she poured out her husband's coffee, Mrs. Foley found restraint as difficult as ever.

"I saw him this morning. He kept absolutely to himself—went round the course three times alone. I marked him from afar," she told Michael. "Just what one would expect."

"Poor old John."

"Did you ever in all your days see anything so sudden and so complete! It was like an event happening in the room. It was almost indecent! And in the midst of that *awful* dinner. Really and truly, by the end of the evening I could have gone cheerfully into hysterics."

"You very nearly did," Michael reminded her.

"Oh no, miles from it. But, Mickie, you don't

seem to realise. In so far as John is concerned, *the thing is done!*"

"Poor old John," said Foley again.

"Poor little Janaki," said Lucy in an altered voice. "I am afraid she couldn't help seeing as well as anybody. I never saw anything so plucky as her civility to Joan after dinner."

"With poison in her heart," laughed Michael.

"She couldn't help what was in her heart. Of course, Joan was very interested, and rather made up to her. They talked politics."

"Oh?"

"The most fearful rot. Mrs. Livingstone fanned herself for a little while and then asked me to go out into the verandah. She couldn't stand it any longer."

Michael laughed. "Why didn't she charge in and lay them low?" he asked.

"Oh, she didn't know how. Neither did I," confessed Lucy. "Then you joined us, and John made straight for the sofa where my friend Joan was sitting, and there they fought from that instant! What could I do but say good night to Janaki? She didn't stay five minutes after Sir Kristo came up—did you notice? Though she ought to have waited, in any case, for Mrs. Livingstone Hooper to go first."

"A broken heart knows no precedence."

"Oh, it's no joking matter. The poor little Rani! And Mrs. Livingstone was quite stuffy, I assure you. With *me*—as if I could help it!"

"I'm afraid your friend didn't make a good impression in the highest official circles," laughed Michael. "As I took her, still heaving with a sense of injury, to her carriage, Mrs. Livingstone said to me, 'Is it true that that Miss Mills has been in jail?' I answered proudly

in the affirmative. 'Why did they let her out?' said Mrs. Livy."

"Cross old cow!" Lucy reflected a moment. "I wonder if John knows that!"

"I dare say not. How should he?"

"Perhaps it will cure him," Lucy meditated. "No," she answered herself, "nothing will cure him."

"And what about the lady?" asked Foley, deciding against jam. "No difficulty there, I suppose. A Home Secretary has never been known to ask twice for anything like that."

"Oho! You think so! You don't know what an amount of character Joan's got! What is a Home Secretary," Mrs. Foley exclaimed loftily, "to Joan Mills?"

"Nothing more, no doubt. But Game's such a good chap."

"Oh, as men go, yes," mused Mrs. Foley, "I don't know. I thought she seemed rather to dislike him."

"A good-looking, well-set-up fellow like that," pursued her husband indignantly. "Young, too. He can't be a day over forty."

"He's thirty-nine," corrected Lucy. "I looked him out in the Civil List before breakfast. Not young—but not old."

"A man with an excellent record and first-rate prospects. A chap with brains and courage and common sense."

"And a dear," added Lucy. "Don't forget that. John's a dear."

"Is he? Well, yes. He is seldom affectionate with me, but we'll call him a dear."

"In a way," emphasised Lucy, "that would be all against him with Joan. I can more easily imagine her

marrying a consumptive brass-founder to take care of him. She has extraordinary ideas you know."

"She must have," returned Michael, lighting a cigar.

"But isn't it the most ridiculous thing that ever happened! John—the invincible John! Who has never looked twice at any woman, in spite of——"

"All temptations? He has looked pretty often at Janaki."

"Only in the way of friendship and admiration. You see Janaki is clever, and can really talk with a man like John Game. A vowed priestess of the mind, he calls her. But I always thought it absolutely platonic on his side, and now I know. If you had *seen* him talking to Joan on that sofa! Not a bit awkward or shy, just delighted with himself, and her, and the whole beautiful circumstance!"

"He certainly seemed interested."

"Interested! It was unmistakable! You didn't see him look after her as she left the room! When she finally did—it was half-past eleven! I thought you and the father would *never* come in from the verandah——"

"He wanted to know about the system of land tenure here," said Foley. "He's an intelligent old boy, but an absolute irreconcilable. Some of those radical chaps, the shrewder sort, come out here and look about them and modify their notions. They see how it is, and when they get home they have less to say. But that won't happen with Mills. He is too old and too prejudiced. He's a kind of inverted idealist——"

"I don't understand."

"Well, he isn't on for any of *our* ideals—the justice and peace, and freedom and that sort of thing that we try to give the country. His notion, I take it, would

rather be to remove, withdraw, destroy, in order that good might come. That sort will always take the chance of good coming. Their skins are all right, you see, if it doesn't. Then he looks at everything with that proletarian cast in the eye that is such a nasty sign at home nowadays. It produced him of course; he lives by it; he's got to keep it up; but it's a part of him too. He's briefed for the perpetual prosecution of his superiors, and he does it *con amore*, because the existence of his superiors makes life bitter to him. Those chaps don't hate their country as you might imagine from the way they behave—they hate the classes who stand for it. And they have an inordinate rush of sympathy, naturally, for races taken care of, not by the white man, but by the gentleman."

"Joan doesn't," said Lucy.

"Doesn't what?"

"Feel like that. She likes all sorts of people. One of her greatest friends is Lady Emily Phayre——"

"The woman who swept the crossing in the cause of female suffrage till the police came and took away her broom?"

"I dare say. Joan says she is a person of great courage and initiative."

"She succeeded in obstructing the traffic. Well, I must be off to court. Just see, Bartholomew, if the brougham's there."

Bartholomew went to see, and as the door closed behind him, Foley looked reflectively at his coffee-cup for a moment and knocked his cigar ash into the saucer. When he spoke it was in a slightly altered tone.

"I quite understand your wanting to back up your friends, dear, but upon my word, I don't know whether

it will be possible to ask them again. The man is exerting a most poisonous influence already."

"What has he been doing?" asked Lucy.

"Well, there's no use in my telling you, because then you wouldn't know, and you might talk. But the police have been given very special instructions, and they're as nervous as cats in the Home Department."

"The *Home Department*! Michael—what a complication."

"You mean with regard to John. Oh, he's not nervous, or wasn't yesterday. Nor isn't to-day," declared Foley. "Nobody need worry about John Game. Though if he should take it into his head that he wants to marry the girl—— But he won't be such an ass. You're taking that too seriously, Lucy."

His wife returned with enthusiasm to the theme.

"I am *never* mistaken," she assured him, "and poor dear old John simply made no attempt to disguise it. And, it is ridiculous, and it may be embarrassing, but since it was to happen, aren't you rather glad——"

"Rather glad?"

"That it happened in this house?"

The door opened and disclosed Bartholomew, bearing the blue bag.

"Brougham waiting, master."

"I don't at all know that I am," Michael replied, as he kissed her and went.

CHAPTER VIII

AN important point about Ganendra Thakore's house in Nagtollah was that he did not live there. It was hard to say precisely where Ganendra did live. He might be found—by some people—at the headquarters of the *Lamp of Youth* newspaper; and he often slept in a tall pink house with barred windows and a drain in front of it in Ram Kishory's Lane. Perhaps his best address would be a firm of native solicitors in a very respectable office in Hastings Street. But the house in Nagtollah was not his residence; nothing could be clearer than that. It was not even wholly his. Uncles, nephews, cousins had claims upon it should misfortune ever sell it. As a personal asset to Ganendra the house in Nagtollah was vague, yet it was probably he who would finally refuse your desire to rent it, if you wrote a letter addressed to the proprietor, though the reply would come from quite another person. I doubt whether even the police, who often have so much more information than might be expected about private residences, could tell you whose exactly was the house in Nagtollah, if you should ask.

As a matter of fact it is not likely that anybody would ask. The house in Nagtollah was the kind of place that one would leave instinctively, with a shrug, to the owner. Far back in other days it had been the "garden-house" of some Calcutta nabob with a

weakness for European exteriors. Even then it was rank and untrimmed, but the walls were all one colour, a tame cheetal roamed in the garden, gold fish swam in the tank, and a little boy sat all day long in the shade of the tamarind trees and shouted to frighten the birds from the fruit. In those days it had cupolas and pretension and seclusion. The village was humble and hard by; the nabob drove out in a closed carriage through rice-fields and country lanes; and when he arrived a salaaming gate-keeper made the entrance wide for him.

Now the gate—the front gate—stood always closed, and it was impossible to call the guardian; he was either dead or deaf. Or perhaps he sat at another entrance, through the premises of Jaffer the Cabuli, in the next street, which, being more unnoticed, would be more easily attempted by marauders. Nagtollah had grown into a suburb, a wilderness of tortuous streets and tiled huts, with the electric tram from Calcutta twisting through it, screaming the whole way. It was very disturbing, the noise of the electric tram. Ganendra often said that it destroyed all sense of privacy.

And with privacy had gone all dignity and all propriety. Weeds grew thick on the crumbling garden wall, in whose crevices many a little family of cobras had thriven in peace. The expanse inside was a tangle of creepers and a jungle of banyans and palms, in which the tank dreamed foully with one eye open. Here and there along the walk a clump of marigolds flaunted garden rights, and a gorgeous orange honeysuckle climbed over the porch; but there was nothing else that looked as if it had been planted by the hand of man.

The house itself had long consented to its own decay. Its walls were grey where the sun struck and livid where the rain had leaked from the eaves' trough. The plaster pillars that were once so like Corinth and so like Chowringhee, still dropped fragments of their capitals, and round most of them twisted the dry mud trail of the white ants. A young papoia grew vigorously in the corner of the roof, and the fanlight over the door, elaborately designed and filled with coloured glass, had more than one broken triangle. Only the gate, the doors, and windows seemed in effective repair. The gate was stoutly locked, and to the windows some thoughtful hand had added outside shutters.

Nevertheless Ganendra's house was inhabited ; and though he did not live in it he paid it frequent visits. Bepin Behari Dey often met his master there. On this particular morning they entered by Jaffer's shop together, and two young Bengalis, who had been sitting in the shade of the banyans for hours in waiting, ran forward to accost the elder man. They were youths of sixteen and seventeen, black-haired, bare-headed, and barefooted ; they left their shoes where they had been sitting. One of them wore a yellow shawl thrown over his shoulders toga-wise. When they reached Ganendra they threw themselves, first on their knees and then on their faces before him, and went through the motions of placing his feet upon their heads. The Brahmin threw out his right hand.

"Victory be to you," he said formally in the vernacular. "Whence do you come?"

The boys rose, smiling vividly, and salaamed with both hands to Bepin.

"From Dilpore, in the district of Bakrigunge, by

favour of the Maharaj," said the eldest, with glistening eyes.

"What is your father's name?"

"Kallynath Sinha, hazur. He is Deputy Magistrate at Dilpur," replied the youth.

"A magistrate! Does he know you have come here?"

"He is well pleased that we should be here," said the second boy glibly.

Ganendra narrowed his eyes.

"You are Kshattriyas. What is your Gotra?" he asked, as a Western catechist might say, "Who made you?"

"Gautama Gotra," they answered together patly.

"Which are your patron saints?"

"Our mother has told us, but we have forgotten," said the elder boy blankly.

"And what is your Veda?"

The boys hesitated, and looked at one another shamefaced. They had read no Veda, they did not even know which of the four their family traditionally studied. It was clear that they came of no ritualistic stock. Ganendra turned away.

"You have leave to return to Calcutta," he told them. "I do not prepare young men for the B.A. degree of the University."

The boys' faces fell; they stood for an instant abashed. Then the eldest said timidly in English—

"We could continue to work up for the examination here, sir."

Ganendra frowned.

"Have you no tongue of your own?" he asked. "It will be well for you to return to your classes, and the lectures of the English professors."

At that the elder again flung himself upon the ground, and clasped Ganendra's feet.

"That the Punditji Maharaj will give us leave to stay!" he wailed. "We have already learned much Latin and whole English course, but now we wish to study *Gita* that we may hate the English. Already we hate them, but not always and not truly—the house of our father is not single-hearted. But the holy *Gita* strengthens the heart. We wish to remain—we wish to remain!"

The other boy shed no tears, but stood looking very solemn.

"Every day," he said, "we read the *Lamp of Youth*. My brother will go without *dhal* in his rice to have that paper. And from the *Lamp of Youth* we learn that he has the soul of a dog, and will be born a dog, who licks the hand of strangers. We are afraid our father is in danger of this. He is not a religious man. But we are religious, and we wish to be made ready to die for our sacred Mother."

Bepin looked at Ganendra and said in Sanskrit, "Can we afford to put out this flame?"

"Go then," said the Brahmin, "seek the Munshi Ramkrishna. He is for beginners. Acquire virtue, and obey the rule. God be with you."

Ganendra waved them along the path toward the house, but the youths, making the *pranam* * joyously, took a way which would not compel them to step upon his shadow.

"We have already too many of these Bengali Kshattriyas," he said to Bepin. "They are stupid and sentimental, like Englishmen. We can never make good philosophers of them."

* Salute to a Brahmin.

In spite of his prohibition to the boys he dropped naturally into English with his companion.

"For a quick apprehension of the principles involved and the sacrifices to be made," he continued, "give me before all others a well-born Kayasth. He is as clear-minded as he is devout."

Bepin looked modestly down. The Kayasth was his own caste—the writers'—said to be born with pens behind their ears.

"We have lived always at the feet of the Brahmins," he said. "We have learned, perhaps, some trifle," but the familiar flattery seemed to pass unheard.

"You know that they have this morning arrested the printer and publisher of the *Lamp of Youth*," asked Ganendra, as he strolled, with bent head, towards some outhouses.

Bepin smiled. "They can do that as often as they like," he said ; "I did not know. Who is the scapegoat this time?"

"Old Lal Kissen is the honest fellow. I am afraid it will be a matter of two years for the poor old man. But he will come out of it well enough. Kolapatta has promised him fifty rupees a month for the time of his incarceration, and others have made arrangements for his family."

"Kolapatta!" It was the name of one of the wealthiest Rajahs in the province. "That is indeed a plain act of sympathy, and glorious news. Is Kolapatta then openly for us?"

Ganendra shook his head.

"They are all kindly affected to us, the nobility—all," he said. "But they have much to lose—or think they have." He gave his companion a smile with the

amendment, and the younger man took it as a lover might have done.

"This Government has enriched them and hung honours upon them, and made it so that they have nothing to fear. This Government," he added sombrely, "has eaten the souls of our princes."

"It is the truth," said Bepin sadly. "They nod as they are told. But in the event of to-day—is there any real danger?"

"I hardly know. The police are searching the premises, of course. I came out here to think it over. But I expected as much. There is nothing there."

"The article of Monday, I suppose?"

Ganendra nodded.

"It was too full of metaphor," he confessed. "Satyendra wrote it, and when he brought it to me, 'This will get us into trouble, dear Satyendra,' I said. 'Let us take out the reference to the offering of white goats.' But he pleaded for it——"

"And you put your blue pencil again behind your ear," said Bepin, affectionately. "Often I also have persuaded you."

"Yes, I was weak with him. His work is so poetical, that man Satyendra. I myself passed the proof, so the fault is mine. I fear we shall not get our press back again this time——"

"Let them confiscate it. There are twenty others!"

"Yes—no doubt. But if Stark should take it into his head as well to suppress the paper I should be sorry," said Ganendra. "The *Lamp of Youth*—I have lighted it——" His voice broke, and he lifted his hand to his eyes. Bepin passed his arm sympathetically about his master's shoulders, and in this attitude they walked on together.

"In Calcutta alone," continued Ganendra, "we had a thousand new subscribers last month. I offered the paper for half-price to any one who would solemnly promise to teach its contents every day to one person who was too poor to buy it. A thousand were willing."

"It was a noble scheme."

"Our Original Scientific Research Fund has sent four young men to study in Paris—you were the first, Bepin—and two to Japan."

"How I reproach myself for the small result!"

"No," said Ganendra. "Are you not still our leader in practical experiment? And this effort that I am making here——"

He paused, and looked in the direction from which a sound came, at once shrill, harsh, and plaintive. On a bit of open sward, at a little distance, sat three young Bengalis with their arms laced round one another's necks, chanting religious verses in the high recitative of the country. They were earnest and unconscious; their strenuous song seemed addressed to the sun; they looked reverent and happy.

"My sword is weak and rusty with sin,
But it can cut a plague spot from your body, O Mother."

As he listened Ganendra's eyes again filled with tears.

"Such good boys—such good boys!" he said.

"Without my paper could I have done this? When all is said, my Sanskrit is not of the best, and my life has not always been exemplary. But every day I can pour oil upon the noblest passions of our young men—that I can do. No, it is a real anxiety—I am much troubled in case Stark goes to extreme lengths."

"If the *Lamp of Youth* is quenched it will be

relighted as the *Torch of the Nation*," exclaimed his companion.

"That is well said, Bepin," Ganendra replied, and seemed comforted. They had crossed the garden and arrived at a row of outbuildings which had once been stables and servants' quarters. The door before which they stopped was padlocked, but Bepin had the key. He unlocked and opened it carefully, and they went in. The place was pitch dark, and had an acrid smell. Bepin left the door ajar for light and air.

Against the mud wall opposite stood a low string bed, and on this Ganendra sat down, and both men looked about them. The hut seemed otherwise empty, except for half a dozen small cases piled in one corner. Bepin pointed at them.

"It has come," he said.

"The consignment from London?"

"Yes. Ashutosh sent me the bill for taking delivery this morning. I am always anxious till the duty has been paid. Now we must get it put away."

Bepin walked across the floor, which creaked under him, put his finger in a knot-hole and prised up a loose board.

"Ah," he said, peering under. "I see the moulds are here, and those screw-cutters I wanted. Now we shall get on. I have been waiting for the moulds, though for my purpose I am quite satisfied with the ordinary cocoanut shell."

"That falls upon the lap of the Mother," said Ganendra smiling. "Sit here beside me, and let us talk of what is to be done."

"Golden is your speech, Maharaj," said the young man, and sat down, not on the bed, but lower, on the floor.

Ganendra's eye fell upon the lettering on the cases.

"Brand's Essence," he read. "You have lived in England—what is that, my son?"

"They have labelled 'Brand's Essence!'" exclaimed Bepin. "But I ordered them to label 'Fruits in Syrup!'"

"Is not one description as good as another for the eye of a Customs' official?" asked Ganendra.

"For that purpose, yes. But—but——" hesitated Bepin. "'Brand's Essence,' is an extract of beef."

The Brahmin made a gesture of repulsion, controlled it, and said gently—

"Then we are well advised to put the boxes out of the way. Such a discovery in a Hindu *asram* * might arouse suspicion."

His tone made light of the blunder, and indeed he had no desire to dwell upon it, being anxious to get on to weightier things, but the cloud deepened in Bepin's face.

"Oh, it is safe enough here," he said. "But it is a sacrilegious mask in which to enter a place like this. I am ashamed, and I fear a bad omen."

"Nonsense!" Ganendra told him laughing. "For a Europe-educated man like you to talk of omens! That would be for a poor old fellow sunk in superstition like me to do. And I feel no alarm. Now tell me all that is in your mind upon the subject." He took the young man's hand.

An hour later they came out of the godown, and Bepin closed and once more locked the door. It was high noon. The sun was delicious about them, and a cricket sang in the grass. Bepin stooped to pick up a scrap of cotton-wool on the path, and put it in his pocket.

* Theological School.

"No," said Ganendra. "As to the person or the place they have not yet made up their minds. I heard from Poona only yesterday. Stark, they say, is too popular, and no finger must be laid on the High Court whatever happens. They advise waiting until Government is goaded into some step that will anger the people, and then selecting the official responsible."

"They urge us forward and hold us back by turns, the Poona people," said Bepin impatiently. "Well, when they make up their minds they will find me ready. Will you come with me to my laboratory this morning? I have changed the entrance. It is now beautifully placed. A zenana in front and a cow-house behind—who will molest me there?"

"No, I do not like your laboratory. I am nervous in it. You see I belong to old Bengal—I have no physical courage," Ganendra confessed; and they walked on in silence for a moment.

"Well, my son, we are all in God's hand. I must see what can be done to safeguard you. Have you been much lately with that true nobleman, Mr. Vulcan Mills?"

Bepin's face glowed.

"Every day I have been in his society! For practical purposes he has made me his secretary. I agreed on condition that the work should be unpaid and for love only. He is learning so fast it amazes me. *Nothing* is too much trouble to him, so long as he elicits the facts. Every day he grows more angry—it is beautiful to see. And he will not go near the officials! He will not go near them at all! But you read the papers—you see what he is doing. He is a godlike man. Is it not wonderful that Parliament should be full of his like—all ready to help us by every means in their power?"

"No doubt there are a few," pondered Ganendra. "And their number is growing. In any case it will be well for you to be allied to him as closely as possible."

"I would give him my life."

"I too have been helping him as best as I could. It is a noble spirit. And the daughter," said Ganendra lightly. "The young lady is by this time, I have no doubt, also a goddess in your opinion?"

Bepin blushed and smiled.

"Seriously, she is a wonder," he said. "She is the first English lady with whom I have become acquainted in this country—"

"Be careful that she does not capture your heart," said Ganendra; and with this jest they parted.

CHAPTER IX

THAT same pleasant morning which shone upon Ganendra Thakore strolling with his young friend, Bepin Behari Dey, in the garden in Nagtollah also saw Fred Beauchamp, of the Bengal Police, seated on the other side of the Lieutenant-Governor's desk at Belvedere. Beauchamp was a born policeman. He was cynical, genial, imaginative, and uncommonly shrewd. His own men were devoted to him, and Sir Matthew Stark had never regretted his appointment as Commissioner over two or three heads that were senior and duller.

"No, sir," he said, putting his pith helmet on the floor, "I don't think we shall get him over this. The men have found absolutely nothing. There's no more evidence that Ganendra Thakore published Monday's leading article in the *Lamp of Youth* than there is that you or I published it."

"What have they got, exactly?" asked Sir Matthew.

"The usual thing. A few dirty account books, unimportant letters, mostly duns from paper mills, some proofs of advertisements—a very disappointing haul. Only one thing of the slightest importance—a job lot of 'Vows,' packed up for delivery, but not, unluckily, addressed."

"Anything new in them?"

"Well—yes. The clauses are stiffer and shorter, and—persons are indicated."

Sir Matthew smiled, and balanced a paper-knife, with attention, on the tips of his fingers. He himself could hardly fail to be among the persons indicated, but he did not ask. Moreover, he had already been shot at in his railway carriage, without being indicated.

"These boys!" he said. "These poor, ridiculous boys! One of these days, Beauchamp, we shall have to hang some of them, and, damn it all, I shan't like the job."

"Hang Ganendra, sir," said His Honour's Commissioner of Police.

"I admit it would be a good thing for the boys. But—we don't seem to catch him, do we, Beauchamp?" said Sir Matthew, with the sly humour that gave him among his officials some of the affection they had accorded to the popular schoolmasters of their boyhood.

"I admit it, sir. So far he has beaten us. If there was any warrant in moral certainty we could have had him over and over again. We run against him in everything we touch. He was at the bottom of that derailment last month; we've traced him right across India, and as far north as Peshawar—which is pretty far north," said Beauchamp significantly; and Sir Matthew nodded.

"It's none of our business, of course; but you heard of that tampering with the Twenty-first Pultanis in Gaurabad—it was kept out of the papers. Ganendra was there very shortly before. He leaves his pugs everywhere," continued Beauchamp, who was a sportsman. "But we can't arrest his pugs. The natives know it as well as we do. When we heard of the shooting of that old German missionary the other day, a babu in my office pointed to this fellow's name in one of our lists, 'There, sir, is the ministering angel,' he said."

The men laughed in concert.

"Personally," said Sir Matthew, "I don't think he wrote the 'white goats' article. It's much too crude for Ganendra. Now, this I would swear to."

He picked a clipping out of a shallow basket on the table, and read aloud—

" 'The times are thickening already with the shadow of a great darkness. The fair hopes'—and so forth— 'are gone for ever. Revolution, bare and grim, is preparing her battlefield, mowing down the centres of order which were evolving a new cosmos, and building up the materials of a gigantic downfall and a mighty new creation. We could have wished it otherwise, but God's will be done.' *That* is Ganendra, the Friday before. He can't disguise his soul."

"I don't know about his soul, sir, but that's his style all right. And it's a style that will cost us bloodshed before long, if we can't shut him up."

Sir Matthew got up, thrust his hands in his pockets, and began pacing up and down.

"I think—mind you, I only think—that the High Court might be depended on for a fairly round sentence if we could get him into the dock," he said.

Beauchamp's face expressed a policeman's view of Courts of Justice.

"Things are getting too serious, even for them. Chakravati was stoned in his motor on his way from court yesterday, and Ashutosh Dutt, who is acting for Graham, told me he had three threatening letters by one post last week. Their lordships are beginning to realise that defeating the ends of politics by exaggerating the means of justice isn't all beer and skittles."

"If they had realised it a little earlier," grumbled Beauchamp, "there would have been less for all of us to

realise now. Well, sir, I haven't got Ganendra Thakore, but I've got an idea."

"Go ahead."

"It's this. We've drawn his rag-shop and taken the doddering old printer whose name is on the rag. Ganendra, who reads every proof, writes every other issue, and gets the money to keep the whole show going, simply transfers the *Lamp of Youth* to another printing press and another printer—the old game. There's only one thing more that can be done—and that rests with you, sir."

"The Act enables me to ask for the suppression of the paper, if that's what you mean," said Sir Matthew. "But I'm not Governor of Poland, Beauchamp."

"I know it, sir, and I was afraid you would look at it in that light. But smash the *Lamp of Youth* and you smash a poison-vat."

"What's in a name? The thing would reappear the next day as the *Light of Asia*."

"A lot, sir. It's extraordinarily well known under that name—sold in the bazars everywhere, and I've seen a schoolmaster translating it aloud under a pipal tree to a whole village. But that's not my point. Suppress his paper, and, if I have any knowledge of the man, he'll come out in the open."

"He'll find some other channel for his stuff."

"All the other native papers of any importance are afraid of him. They know that he's a marked man and we're dead on to the scent of his style—I mean his soul, sir, as you said. They won't touch him. Besides, he's identified with his own rag. It wouldn't be the same thing to him. The man's intoxicated, sir, with his own direct personal influence. He's got it that he's an avatar—Krishna, or one of those gentry come to life

again. His Mahratta friends keep telling him so, and he's come to believe it. There's no such thng as a private avatar. He does business with the public. Shut him up in print and——”

“Well?” said Sir Matthew, sitting down again.

“He'll talk.”

The door opened gently, and a dachshund waddled in, crossed the room to her master's chair and jumped into his lap. Her entrance meant that the Lieutenant-Governor had already spent fifteen minutes with his visitor, and that an Indian gentleman of importance was waiting to see him. When the next claimant was an official, the private secretary sent in Jinks the fox terrier.

But Sir Matthew twisted her long ears and took no hint.

“How are the puppies, Julia?” he inquired; and Julia, looking at him expressively, understood that she might stay, and made herself more than ever comfortable.

“Talk,” repeated His Honour. “Talk, will he, Julia? And pull chestnuts out of the fire for his friends in Poona—eh, Julia?”

“He'll go in for his crown of glory, or whatever they give 'em,” said Beauchamp. “And we'll do our best to see that he gets it.”

“I don't know whether we want a case under the Seditious Meetings Act if we can avoid it,” said Sir Matthew. “It won't be understood at home—I've always said so. We shall be interfered with, under one disguise or another, and that will be the devil. Our friend Mills is already getting his work in. Have you seen this week's home papers?”

“I believe they are full of him.”

“They are; and so is Lord Offord's dispatch between

the lines. If we are to have hangings I should like to begin with the Calcutta correspondents of the London papers."

"Oh, I'm with you, sir," said Beauchamp absently. He had his scheme very much at heart, and was cudgelling his brains for another argument. Sir Matthew continued gently to pull the dachshund's ears.

"I suppose you keep an eye on the fellow?" he said.

"Mills? Rather. We could give him most of his fixtures before he makes them. And generally—just as a precaution—we double the force in the neighbourhood. But as long as he confines himself to going about inspecting, and talking through his hat in the newspapers, I don't expect any trouble. He is in bed to-day with a bilious attack after eating too much *ghi* at the house of a gentleman named Hurry Lal Ghose. I understand he is very fond of their messes—lick his fingers after 'em. Well, sir——"

"Ah! No, don't go yet, Beauchamp. They tell me that Sri Ganendra is his chief source of information."

"Fills him up constantly. I saw them yesterday in Chowringhee walking arm in arm."

"And of course in return, he's bucking them all up," mused Sir Matthew. "I expect he has pledged the House of Commons a dozen times by now. By the way, what's this I hear about John Game and the young lady? I understand he's perfectly, shamelessly devoted."

The Commissioner of Police smiled a shrewd smile.

"I understand Miss Mills is as keen a politician as her father, and has a good deal of influence with him," he said. "I don't think we need worry about Game, sir. He's got a long head."

"Oh, that's the way the land lies, is it? What a fat

dog you are to be sure, Julia! Down with you! Well, Beauchamp, I'll talk it over with the Viceroy and Farquhar, and if they're not afraid of the stink, I think we'll put out the *Lamp of Youth*—and see what comes of it. Good morning. Good morning."

The door opened six inches again.

"Hello, Jinks!" said His Honour. "Julia, you'll have to wait."

CHAPTER X

IT was Sunday afternoon and the grounds of the Victoria Club were filling fast. One after another showy carriages and expensive motors turned in at the gate ; and ladies and gentlemen in the garb of East and West got out of them. Small tables and garden chairs dotted the grass ; already the band was playing.

The Victoria Club was the newest social institution in Calcutta. It might be said indeed to have been born of modern complexities, and was often spoken of as a sign of the times. It was open to Indian and Englishman alike, and its object was to promote friendly intercourse between the worlds they inhabit. High Court Judges were prominent in it, and so were nearly all the senior officials. The Sheriff was a member, and the President of the Chamber of Commerce. It had become so obvious that something must be done.

If the Indian members were less conspicuous it was entirely owing to the difficulty, still acknowledged by most of the Europeans, in telling them apart. They were distinguished enough in themselves. Some of them were noblemen, some were scientists. Many were Municipal Commissioners, and nobody knew anything more about them ; others were lawyers and journalists. There was a sprinkling of magistrates ; two or three of the most eminent were, or had been, members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council. They were all men with

a matured stake in the country ; all, or nearly all, were labelled "moderate" in politics, and progressive in society. They had accepted the suggestion that it would be a good thing to mingle and eat ices together in public token of amity ; and some ate the ices, and some did not, but every one of them was waiting to see what would happen next.

"Yes, yes, Rajah, I quite agree," John Game was saying to Kolapatta, a shrivelled old gentleman with an entreating expression, who walked with a stick. "If the big landholders will lead the way co-operative banking is bound to succeed, and in the end we shall squeeze the usurer out of the country."

The Home Secretary spoke with his usual hearty optimism, but there was an absent note in his voice, and his eyes inquired constantly among the arrivals. The little old Rajah, peering up at him, followed his glance into the crowd.

"I myself have put down half a lakh, and I am not afraid for my six per cent.—not at all," chuckled Kolapatta ingratiatingly.

"Indeed you have, Rajah—I heard Sir Matthew mention it to His Excellency only yesterday. Lord Campden was extremely pleased. He has the enterprise, you know, very much at heart. He told me himself that he would like to see it supply the agricultural need in every province in India."

The Rajah smiled, a tremulous and highly satisfied smile.

"Our beneficent ruler——" he began, and stopped, for John, with a parting affectionate tap on the shoulder, had already vanished from his side. The smile, however, remained fixed, and the old man hobbled about with it so long that the barrister, Mr. Devi Das Bose,

said to the solicitor, Mr. Kalla Chand Ghose, both in silk hats—

“Kolapatta is certainly in high favour. What is coming to him next—a C.I.E.?”

It was Jotindra Pal that had the honour, that Sunday, of bringing Mr. Vulcan Mills and Miss Joan Mills to the afternoon party of the Victoria Club. Jotindra was a wealthy contractor, and either a moderate in wolf's clothing or an extremist in that of the sheep. He was for ever preaching reason, with an indulgent sigh to impetuous youth, or treason, with saving clauses, to respectable age. Jotindra was always full of amity, and generally, nowadays, full of grief. He throbbed with all the new national aspirations; but he valued pleasant relations with Englishmen generally and the signature of anybody in the Department of Public Works. He joined the Victoria Club with tears in his eyes, and invited Vulcan to its first practicable entertainment as proof that whatever crying instances of oppression and wrong might be humbly submitted to his notice, as man to man rulers and ruled were on the best of terms.

And Vulcan had conscientiously added it to engagements that were more to his taste. His time, in the fortnight that had elapsed since the Foleys' dinner, had been crowded with these, and he proclaimed that he could not have too many. He advanced at once his one-sided banner. He said with a plainness that seemed to admire itself, that his business was not to approve the right but to expose the wrong. He did not wish to obscure his judgment by superficial aspects—to him all that was right *was* superficial—when it was his business to get to the root of the matter. Closer and closer every day he saw himself getting to the root of the matter;

and in this exercise we cannot be surprised that he found more in a perjured policeman than in the justice of the courts, that a tactless Collector outweighed the prosperity of a district, and the corpse of a starved coolie obscured the saving of a race. So he came to the Victoria Club's afternoon party with reluctance, but he came.

"Here is your friend the Honourable Home Secretary again," said Mr. Jotindra Pal jocosely to Mr. Mills, descriing Game in the distance, "and I think he is coming towards us."

"I am convinced that that fellow has been told off to get hold of me," said Vulcan impatiently. "He showers attentions on us. We must dine with him at his club, or lunch with him on his launch or some such nonsense, every two-three days. I'm surprised that he thinks a man like myself could be taken in with bait of that sort."

Jotindra chuckled. "No doubt he knows on which side his bread is buttered," he said. "I hear the Government is already very much upset by your presence here, sir. Very much upset."

"Mr. Game never talks politics, father," said Joan. "You must admit that. Since that night at the Foleys I have often tried to draw him into them, and he will hardly say a word. And he is very interesting about the country. I think I like him better than you do."

They watched his approach ; he was clearly making in their direction. On his way he avoided detention by more than one jewelled brown hand ; and he lifted his hat, as he passed, to Sir Kristodas and the Rani Janaki.

"Oh, he is a very *fine* fellow," said Jotindra feelingly. "He has true sympathy with us. His is a heart of

flesh and not a clod of clay. Yet not at all open to persuasion. You have heard how all the Hindu gunlicences were withdrawn from Eastern Bengal last month? Mr. Game will not hear *any* appeal. He is a very strong man. And yet always the kind word. You inquire and you will find him very popular among the natives. If we had a few more like Mr. Game everything would be alright."

Vulcan frowned.

"I don't like hearing you speak of your countrymen as 'natives,' Mr. Pal," he said. "To me they are much more than natives; they are——"

"Your fellow-subjects, sir," supplied Jotindra with glistening eyes.

"Well, let it go at that. And if you ask me, I tell you that in my belief the more John Games you get to rule your country for you the further off is the day of your emancipation."

The Home Secretary came up, saluting them, and shaking hands with Jotindra, who bent as low for the purpose as his corpulence would permit. And though Game's eyes searched Joan's face and noted Vulcan's air, it was to Mr. Pal that he spoke.

"I must congratulate you, Jotindra Babu, on bringing Mr. Mills to see what we are trying to foster here," he said formally. "I hope you have pointed out all our celebrities—Kolapatta—Golbunj—and isn't that the Maharaja of Panchperganna? He doesn't often favour us."

"I have made acquaintance with the Rajah of Kolapatta," remarked Vulcan. "I was introduced to him by Mr. Thakore. He gave me a very handsome entertainment in Indian style last night."

"Did he indeed?" said Game reflectively. They

had moved on across the sward as they talked, and had come close to Kolapatta, who turned and saw the group at his elbow. Vulcan raised his hat elaborately, but the Rajah, with a frightened look, hurried off in another direction.

"He is growing very old. He does not always recognise his friends," said Game with a little smile. Joan looked at him penetratingly.

"He is afraid of you," she charged him.

"Very old and very priest-ridden," said Game. "But not half a bad little potentate in his day, Kolapatta. He is behaving quite well just now in one or two matters."

"Let me introduce my very respectable friend Ashish Chunder Dutt," beamed Jotindra, taking by the elbow a bearded gentleman in a grey and gold turban and flowing garments of white.

"He is very big man in the cotton industry, and most philanthropic fellow."

"Come and have some tea," urged Game in Joan's ear. "Jotindra has a great many respectable friends, and they are all waiting to be introduced. You will find it tiring."

Joan smiled and yielded. Already, if you had asked her, she would have described John Game as the best of bureaucrats. Already she had told herself that in other circumstances he was a man with whom friendship would have been natural and pleasant. So much, with a very different aim, he had managed to accomplish. He had made himself interesting, as part of an administrative structure which Miss Mills was observing with wide, accusing, antagonistic eyes. Her opinion was fair enough to him personally, but it did just that much for him and no more; it placed him fairly in the

picture, and it would never have occurred to her that he had any idea of stepping out of the frame.

They sat down together at one of the little tables, and Game nodded to the man in attendance.

"*Cha*, please."

"How amusingly you mix the two languages out here," said Joan. "But I like the 'please,'" she added. "It's almost a foreign word, isn't it, in this country?"

John flushed. It was something like a personal touch from her, and the calm approval of it gave him a pleasure that was a little ambiguous.

"How you dissect us all!" he laughed. "I feel like a—species."

"You are a species," she assured him. "Dear me, yes. You're not a bit like Englishmen in England."

"Aren't we?" he asked a little wistfully. "I suppose we do settle down fearfully into our own rut. You see we're put on the rails, and we have to just go on the rails. It's an iron system."

Joan looked at him attentively. "You are too good for it," she declared.

"Not half good enough! No man is out here. The job's too big for the best of us."

"Then you don't take the line that the English are a heaven-sent boon for which these miserable people should be grateful every hour of their lives?"

"What about the opportunity of service? After all—there's that," said Game simply. "I love my job. And," he smiled at her, "I shall defend it to the last."

It was almost as if he threw himself happily upon her mercy, and she looked at him with kindness, perceiving the man behind the official.

"You will have to defend it," she told him, "before long. These people *must* manage their own affairs."

"They must indeed—as soon as they can," he agreed.

"England won't postpone it for ever—recognising that they can," she insisted.

"Have you recognised it—already—Miss Mills?"

Joan flushed under the gentle banter of his tone, and hesitated, as if on the brink of a torrent of argument. Then she said quietly—

"My father thinks so."

"I'm afraid he does," said Game. "But here's tea. Am I to pour it out, or will you? What have you been doing since Wednesday?"

"We have been in the famine district with Ganendra Thakore."

"Of course you have. I saw it in the papers. Bread and butter? I'm afraid Ganendra was able to show you some pretty bad scarcity."

"Scarcity! He showed us *famine*. It's not easy to mistake it, you know—in the flesh."

"Did you see any of the relief camps?"

"He did not take us there. No, there was no—relief—where we went. There was just starvation. Men and women who had famished for days. They pursued us, clamouring, and their hands—drew the very blood from our hearts."

Game returned her glance steadily, though her eyes were full of tears. She waited for his reply, but he made none, so she went on.

"One skeleton—I shall see him always!—tried to dig in the sand for the withered rice underneath. He found a little. And he was too weak to eat it, and died with it in his hand—I saw him die. Oh, what a witness!"

"I hope to God you didn't photograph him," said Game, almost roughly.

"I myself couldn't—couldn't. But Mr. Thakore had brought a photographer and told him to do it. And father approved."

"He can do as he likes," said Game.

"That was an old man, but I saw a young woman—Mr. Thakore tried to feed her with rice water, but she could not swallow."

"In the district you saw," Game explained rather drearily, "there was drought all through the rainy season, and then when the summer rice crops appeared floods came down, the worst for years, and covered large tracts of country with a thick deposit of sand——"

"Yes," she said, "we knew how the distress arose."

The implication was that he might explain, if he liked, how any benevolent authority was justified in tolerating it when it had arisen. He seemed to debate with himself whether he would, perhaps whether he could, or not.

"I know something about that part of the province," he said presently. "I put in a couple of years there in the beginning of my service. It is a district particularly difficult to administer, especially after floods. It is not easy to get at the distress. You have to go about in a country boat—practically single-handed——"

He stopped, aware that he was making something like excuses.

"I am sure it must be," she said gravely.

"Where did Ganendra take you—to Ruri? I thought so."

"Why did you think so? He took us there, quite frankly, because he said the people of Ruri were in a bad way, and he wanted us to see what a famine-stricken village really was."

"And you think you saw the people of Ruri?"

"One believes one's own eyes, Mr. Game."

"May I ask how many you saw?"

"I should think about a hundred, all asking for food."

"In the village of Ruri there are not fifty souls all told. Of these thirty-five men, women, and children were employed, at that moment, on relief works at Gopindi, twenty-one miles away. The people you saw had been gathered from probably thirty villages and brought to Ruri, which is conveniently central, to meet you. When I heard that you had gone in that direction I made some inquiries; and I know."

Joan looked at him, checked, but only for an instant.

"I think you have been misinformed," she said coldly. "Mr. Thakore assured us that we saw a typical village in the grasp of famine, and you must not ask us to disbelieve him. I hope you will forgive me for saying that already I think we know Mr. Thakore better than any official could——"

"Do you?" said John grimly.

"Besides, he went to feed the people—we saw him do it—and we only happened to go with him. What do your underlings know, who report to you? None of them were there! And what does it matter where the people came from, when some of them could hardly walk upright from hunger?"

She looked very vivid in her indignation. A couple of officials, standing by, smiled understandingly at one another.

"Game's getting it hot," said one of them.

"Very well," John replied gently, "I will not ask you—again—to disbelieve Mr. Thakore. After all, I cannot

expect—and, as you say, we are compelled to admit the famine. But there are one or two things that you must try to remember. One is that where there are conditions of famine the condition of starvation is inevitable. It can only be alleviated——”

“Oh, why don’t you——”

“Let me finish. Another is that in a country like this there is a parasite class that lives always on the verge of starvation, and the least adversity snuffs these poor wretches out. The people you saw at Ruri were chiefly beggars and lepers and village idiots—weaklings of all sorts——”

“They were——”

“Yes, I know. Another thing is that you cannot possibly know anything of the difficulties and hindrances and complexities under which we have to deal with these people. It would take a week to explain, and then you would not believe me! But one thing you can believe, and that is that we are only a Government—we are not God Almighty.”

Joan flashed a smile at him.

“Considering what you undertake to do, that seems a pity,” she said.

He smiled back at her, all his plea and all his protest lost in this token of her favour.

“Are you to be at the Foleys’ to-morrow afternoon?” he asked.

“Yes. But father is not—if you want to see him,” she said, with sudden remembrance of Vulcan’s suspicion.

“I want much more to see you.”

“I think you ought to talk to father direct, Mr. Game.”

John started, perceived the implication, and flushed under it.

"Don't misconceive me," he said. "I am no politician."

"What are you, then?"

"A mere administrator," he told her. "And a man who is in love with you," his eyes added, but it was not time to say that yet.

It was growing late, and they had risen to leave their places. John turned, at the touch of a hand upon his elbow.

"Have you seen this?" asked Sir Robert Farquhar, Member for the Home Department, who had just arrived. He slipped a telegram into his Secretary's hand, and went on, without waiting for a reply.

"Shall we sit down again?" urged Game. "It's probably not confidential, and it may be interesting." He glanced at it as he spoke.

"What is it?" asked Joan.

"The report of a disturbance, apparently."

"How you watch these people!"

"Yes, we have to," replied Game, and looked more carefully at the message.

It was of some length, and Mr. Game permitted himself to get to the end of it without divulging its contents to his companion.

"At last," he commented half to himself, and refolded the sheet.

"Well," said Joan, "is it good news?"

"I'm afraid I think it is."

"Then may I hear—if it's not confidential?"

Just for an instant John Game looked as if he wished it were confidential.

"Yes," he said. "Yes—certainly. It will be in all to-morrow's papers." Still he hesitated. "Shall I read it to you?" he asked.

"Please," she said; and he unfolded the telegram.

"This afternoon at five o'clock Inspector James Clark with five policemen effected the arrest of Ganendra Thakore in the act of addressing a political meeting of which no notice had been given. The meeting was attended by about six hundred persons, including a number of University students, several of whom proved to be armed with revolvers, while others carried *lathies*. Ganendra Thakore was arrested toward the end of his address, which was highly inflammatory in character, and an attack upon the police ensued, in which Inspector Clark was dangerously wounded by a revolver shot, and a policeman, named Hurrish, was killed. The meeting was held in the Hall of the Natural History Research Society in Beadon Square. No precautions whatever seem to have been taken to evade the notice of the police, and the meeting appears to have been intended as an open and direct violation of the law. Ten students and three other persons, whose names have not yet been ascertained, were also arrested. Later: Clark died half an hour after being taken to hospital."

"Thank you," said Joan. She rose and stood rigid for a moment.

"I think," she said, raising her voice a little—"I am glad to think that my father and I are partly responsible for Mr. Thakore's action. We urged him not to submit to your intolerable law."

"For God's sake," said Joan Game, "be careful what you say;" but she had left him, and crossed over to the group of Indian gentlemen among whom her father was still making acquaintance, before the words were out of his mouth. He looked after her with dismay for a moment, and then accepted his abandonment.

In a few moments it was evident that the news had arrived by other channels than the pocket of the Hon. Home Member. Little groups formed themselves to communicate it—little groups on strictly racial lines. Presently, with a flourish, a carriage and pair came up the drive, and the Rajah of Kolapatta, without any of the usual ceremonial leave-takings, hobbled across the lawn and got into it. Knots of Indian gentlemen seemed to fade into the dusk; the few Englishmen that were left found themselves in an increasing majority. Sir Robert Farquhar and John Game took advantage of the shadows and the departures to have a few minutes' private conversation; and there was an odd moment when the Home Member and his Secretary, with the Socialist Leader and his daughter, and Jotindra Babu in uneasy attendance, formed the whole residue of the Victoria Club's afternoon party.

CHAPTER XI

THE Amir of Afghanistan, when the mail-runner from Peshawar brought him the news of the arrest of Ganendra Thakore, twisted his beard and said, "It would have been quicker to take out his tongue." But this potentate lives, as a rule, upon the far side of the Himalayas. Few persons on the near side felt inclined to a view quite so summary. The Anglo-Indian newspapers rejoiced frankly, published their rejoicings next morning, and dismissed the matter. A person known to be dangerous to the public peace had been temporarily laid by the heels; and in their view the world did not revolve round Ganendra Thakore. The Indian ones repressed their feelings for some days, and then began, singly and in twos and threes, a long recurring lament, touched with hysteria, which swept through the cities, eddied in the bazars, and lost itself in the furrowed country from one coast to the other. Those published in Roman letters and the English language took advantage of that circumstance to ask whether the gagging of political opinion was an English proceeding, and reproduced curious utterances in Hyde Park made in the ear of a perfectly callous police. The moderate *Commentator* quoted lines from "Coriolanus" inculcating the love of freedom, and exclaimed—

"These things you teach in our universities, yet when we put them in practice you stop our mouths and clap us into handcuffs."

It was a wail of children, blind to all but their grievance. The fact that the law had been broken was nowhere thought worthy of mention. Murder had ensued, but that did not matter either.

The vernacular journals were less careful in their choice of terms, and as there are about a thousand of them, and they all spoke at once, the authorities had the widest selection for prosecution. When bail was refused a despairing shriek went across four seas to Lord Offord, Secretary of State, who alternately stopped his sympathetic ears with his conscientious fingers, and listened with anxiety for its reproduction in the gramophone of the London Radical press.

In the Criminal Intelligence Department of the Government of India they noted with interest how personal the note was in all directions. From Lahore to Mymensingh, Ganendra was the brother, the saint, the friend. In Bombay, which had been extremely constitutional for some time owing to a surprising verdict and a conspicuous example, they held a mass meeting and sent resolutions home to Lord Offord that would have done credit to a Westminster assembly of divines. In Delhi the crowd voted no resolutions, but broke the windows of the station club, and very reluctantly made room for the cavalry turned out to clear the streets. In Madras the University students boycotted the lecture-rooms for three days, and roamed the city mourning in barefooted, bareheaded bands, singing songs composed in honour of Ganendra.

"He spent his travelling allowance," said the Deputy Secretaries.

India cried out, but India was prepared, India understood. In her secret conscience India only wondered at the leniency that left her dangerous leader

abroad so long. India quoted Mill on liberty, and Shakespeare on the human heart, because they were appropriate to the occasion, but the view she intimately understood was that of the Amir of Afghanistan. It was different with the indignation of Mr. Vulcan Mills. That was based on his best belief and his dearest tradition. He was so indignant, so honestly indignant, that he found it difficult to remain in Calcutta. He was like a worshipper who sees his idol broken by its own priests—he wanted to fly the temple. But this was only in the first heat of his anger. Presently he saw a duty through it, a duty to stay, and stand, alone if necessary, for British ideals where he believed they were being trodden underfoot. Ganendra, on his way to the Alipore jail, sent him a message—

“Do not weep for me. It is the happiest day of my life.”

Bepin brought it, written on a page torn from a note-book. Vulcan read it with a kindling eye and handed it to his daughter.

“It is quite true,” said Joan. “We mustn’t. I know how he feels.”

“You can tell him,” said Vulcan, “that we won’t weep for him. But we’ll see him through. Eh, my girl? We’ll see him through.”

And it soon became plain that in the mouth of the Socialist Leader the phrase was no idle one. To this day the list of the Ganendra Thakore Defence Fund bears in the place of honour the name of Vulcan Mills for the amount of one hundred pounds. He and Joan arranged to travel the rest of the way second class. [The list closed in forty-eight hours at a lakh of rupees, the last subscriber being a female child who gave her nose-ring.] Interviewers flocked to the rooms in the

Grand Hotel, and were abundantly rewarded. To one Mr. Mills said that the sight of the operation of such an Act in the king's dominions had shaken his faith in British sincerity to the core.

"I stand before you ashamed, not of my country, but of my country's interpreters," he said.

To another reporter he pledged his word that the legitimate aspirations of the people should form part of his party's programme within a month of his return to England ; but the luckiest was the representative of the *Calcutta Freeman*. His name was de Silva, and he licked his pencil as he wrote it down.

"I propose to watch this trial," said Vulcan to Mr. de Silva, "on behalf of the House of Commons."

That was wired home, and in due time reached Further Angus, where they exulted, like men of independence, in a casual way.

"Vulcan's having a mill wi' the Viceroy out yonder," they said, and backed Vulcan. A Viceroy, for that reason only, was probably in need of chastisement.

Sir Philip Marcus also extolled him, in language more refined, in long letters to the papers, and certain followers of Vulcan's, who might be described as the more advanced and less informed, took public and private occasion to allude to what they called his campaign against the Indian bureaucracy ; but as the House was not in session there was no public measure for the amount of sympathy Mills carried with him. The London press had kept an eye on him from the beginning, and made much of his doings from the point of view of news and sensation, but abstained, for the most part, from more than colourless comment, for reasons.

It had suddenly become a practical certainty that

Parliament would meet in February shortly to dissolve, and the chances of the pending general election were very even. In spite of the bold and increasing demands of the extreme Socialist wing under Mills, the Tory Labour coalition Government had fairly justified the experiment of their existence, chiefly by discreet innovations, nursing agriculture, and protecting manufactures. On the other hand, the Liberal Opposition, strong from the beginning, had gained appreciably in the country by their divorce, fluctuating as it had sometimes proved, from the spoilers of capital and the confiscators of land.

The issues of the struggle were nearly all domestic. There was no colonial question, and an unusually untroubled period of foreign relations had fallen to the luck of the Government. The national interest was thus concentrated almost exclusively upon family affairs. Extension of the suffrage, and of the State pensions wrung from the Liberals, graded taxation, and compulsory military training, were all lying on the anvil of the year. The eyes of many countries, vexed in their degree by kindred movements, were turned upon England's decision; and more than one imitator waited upon the event.

Vulcan Mills' excursion into Indian politics was almost equally irritating, at the moment, to his friends and to his enemies. The Government felt very naturally that it was not the moment for an onslaught upon established institutions anywhere, and were in no mind to see public attention drawn, in a cavilling mood, to so unresponsive a structure as the Indian administration. The Opposition, for their part, had to consider that the "unrest" in India was a Liberal inheritance and did not make good heckling material. Besides, Mills was

preaching out there good Liberal doctrine which could not be conveniently repudiated. Moreover, as a detrimental it was a pity, from their point of view, that he should be so far out of the way.

"Whatever harm he may do his own side in India," remarked Henry Ainslie, Opposition Leader in the House, "he would do a great deal more at home."

Labour was trimming, falling away a little from the old crude theories of spoliation. Ainslie, driving his moderate, middle-class, anti-socialist course, felt that a few speeches from the veteran who waved "the reddest flag of all," would be a useful reminder to the country.

These circumstances no doubt accounted for what looked something like a conspiracy of reticence among the responsible political dailies upon the subject of Vulcan Mills' tour in the East. The weekly *Bystander* lectured him portentously, shaking, as it were, a dignified finger; the *London Daily* published Joan's portrait, "Vulcan Mills' Travelling Companion," and an article describing her devotion to her father; and the Socialist journals cheered him on; but the party organs on both sides allowed him to lift up the banners of his native democracy in Calcutta without allowing themselves to be greatly exercised.

Mills understood it well enough, but was none the less depressed. Unconsciously, perhaps, he had counted on more criticism from the governing class. He was out, he always had been out, against the governing class; and he fiercely desired their criticism. Their criticism helped him, enormously, to realise himself the protagonist of the ideals of humanity which he believed himself to be, while its political effect had ever been but to sink him deeper in the hearts of Further Angus.

He had looked forward, as well, in his own phrase, to rousing the heart of England; and his chagrin at not rousing it more effectively may have helped him to evolve the famous phrase about watching the trial of Ganendra Thakore on behalf of the House of Commons. He may have said to Joan, or to his inner consciousness, "That will wake them up a bit."

It did wake them up—a bit. A great many people laughed, a few frowned; they swelled with pride in the public-houses of Further Angus. The Socialistic *Cry* and the *Call* took occasion to say again what they had said before, and the word "vagaries" ran through the other journals like a titter. *Punch* had a cartoon, and the *Times* published its first article—there were eventually three—of deprecation and remonstrance. Vulcan, reading the cables in the Calcutta papers, took heart again.

The trial was fixed for the thirty-first of January. It was last on the list of a crop of trials; Vulcan was watching them all. There were three under the Arms Act, of persons found in possession of rifles and revolvers without a licence, two seditious newspaper charges, and one case—a curious one—of the knifing of a European by a native prostitute. Mr. Mills, who watched some of them from the Bench, showed respect for the courts and made no direct comment while the trials were proceeding; but, thrusting his hands in his pockets, which he did when he wished to express unequivocal despair, he told Jotindra Pal in general terms that he could imagine himself in Russia; and this too was printed.

Meantime, his faithful young secretary advanced not only in Vulcan's respect and in his sympathy, but in his affections also.

"I've taken a liking to the lad," he told Jotindra and the others, who said among themselves, "What a heart he has! With him is no distinction of skin. Our sons and brothers are as his own."

So prodigal was Bepin of his time and energy on their behalf that in the beginning Vulcan and Joan had scruples.

"How is it," asked Joan, "that you can devote yourself like this to my father? Surely you have your family to consider—your profession——"

"I have only my country," the young man told her; and in that high agreement they let the matter rest. From their meeting in the train she had emphasised her friendship for him, seeing it but one more of the brotherly amities with which her life had been strewn since she was twenty. It had amused and interested her to bring the relation upon this plane. In the beginning she had seen easily that he had one glance for her and quite another for her father. It was, she told herself smiling, what one had always understood of Orientals—they thought of women as inferior creatures. She would prove the contrary to Bepin. It would be one of the things she would do for him. And she found it very easy to do. He was extraordinarily sensitive to just such mental statures and personal significances. In a week he was saying to her with humble admiration, "You have the intellect of a man," upon which Joan proved that she had that of a woman so far as to be flattered.

There were many things, she found, that she could do for him, and a few that he could do for her. One of these was to introduce her to certain "orthodox" ladies, his relatives, whose whole world lay behind the high walls of their husbands' fathers' houses. Strange little

ladies she found them, with big reticent eyes, sometimes very pretty, sometimes very fat, always wonderfully jewelled, and, when she gave them confidence, surprisingly political. One of them, sitting in a pink and gold heap on the floor, told her with intensity that she had neither seen, touched, nor tasted anything made in England for eighteen months. Joan gave the applause that was plainly expected of her, but came home a little disconcerted.

"Oh, to get *at* them!" she said to her father. "They are darlings, but they have no breadth of view—no breadth of view whatever."

Vulcan, as he could not have been admitted, did not accompany his daughter and Bepin upon these visits, but he saw them off from the door of the hotel. Their first departure had a touch of embarrassment. Joan got into the carriage; and Bepin, after an instant's hesitation, attempted to take his place beside the driver.

"I doubt if Miss Mills will allow that," remarked Vulcan benignly.

"Certainly not," said Joan. "Please get in, Mr. Dey."

She blushed as she said it, no doubt with indignation, but the two drove off together so self-consciously, that Vulcan, standing in the door, smiled shrewdly as he looked after them.

CHAPTER XII

JOHN GAME had long ago said to the Rani Janaki, "I am afraid Miss Mills has not been quite fully or fairly informed about affairs out here. I hope you will help her to a clearer view in some directions."

All things being considered, the hope was a pathetic one, but no doubt Janaki hardly saw this aspect of it as she replied—

"Is it not rather her father whose view is important?"

"Oh, the old boy is past praying for," John laughed; "but I should like his daughter to see things a bit straighter."

"For personal reasons," suggested Janaki with a trembling lip.

"Yes," he replied, and looked at her with a smile which was almost a confession.

Janaki veiled her eyes and made no promise, but Game took her good will for granted, and constantly included her in those parties and expeditions which struck Vulcan as such an incredible waste of time. She always came, silent, reticent, clinging to the shadow of her father, but aware of Game's every movement and Joan's every sign. Mrs. Foley, who was also often made to assist, said to her husband that Janaki seemed to grow more and more "native" as John Game's courtship went ingenuously on; and Mrs. Foley, as we know, observed narrowly. Under the stress of the thing she had to see and the complication of her part in it, Janaki

shrank visibly from the new world she had conquered into the old one from which she came. She retreated, in spirit at least, from the conventions she had carried so cleverly and the manners which became her so well. Even her bearing altered. Her head took the droop of the zenana, and her shoulders fell forward under her sari ; she returned a greeting as timidly as any of the "curtain hidden" might. Now and then some phrase or gesture from the early time surprised Sir Kristodas in their private life. She reminded him more and more of the girl he had sent to Oxford. Only with Game Janaki struggled to hold her own. Still with him she talked politics and Plato, noting his paler interest in these absorptions, but bravely tending for her part the intellectual flame that sprang between them. What she had won, that was hers ; nobody should take that.

Presently it became clear, even to Janaki, even perhaps to John, that in this new adventure his course was not to be simple, nor his path plain.

Joan Mills did not even seem to perceive its direction. She was modern and serious, a combination with little vanity and no coquetry ; and her heart, that might otherwise have been aware of certain plain matters, was obsessed by her father's mission and the political situation about her. She saw in John Game one factor of it, a factor of whom she could ask questions ; and his anxiety to give her the opportunity she could explain well enough. More than once she pointed out to Vulcan the value of their easy access to so fair a mind ; and to Game, who waited with impatience for the softening of a look, she would now and then confess with magnanimity the modification of a view. She "encouraged" him to argument, to the defence of this and the explanation of that. In these directions she

even led him on ; but he could not deceive himself into the belief that he made progress in any other.

Perhaps the last to be convinced of this state of things was the Rani Janaki, who saw it turbidly, but finally did come to an appreciation of it. I cannot say whether she was advanced enough to hope from it, or only sufficiently developed to suffer differently on account of it ; but there is no doubt that she saw in it certain lines upon which she might still dispute with fate. Here, too, it is hard to decide whether Oxford influenced her most, or her grandmother, or the grandmother of us all. What happened was that Janaki permitted Joan to become interested in her.

It was very easy. Like every one else Joan was drawn, touched, charmed by the daughter of Sir Kristodas. From the first Janaki saw signs of an enthusiastic devotion, such an enthusiastic devotion as those she had often encountered in Oxford ; she had learned of necessity to deal gently but firmly with them there. At their second meeting Joan held out an impulsive hand.

"Let us be friends," she said ; and the Rani, smiling delicately, replied—

"I greatly enjoy your conversation."

It seemed to be enough, with the little cold palm that dropped automatically into Joan's, a form, a mere English "shake-hands," that carried no compact with it in the eyes of Janaki ; and from that they went on.

Miss Mills' conversation was strenuously political, and in the beginning it almost seemed as if she had the task of converting the Judge's daughter to the popular movement.

"I am a moderate," said the Rani. "The English

papers say that the extremists are only the moderates in a hurry. I think sometimes that I, too, should like to hurry. But I am a moderate."

"When did moderation ever accomplish anything?"

Joan replied. "The English Government has its ear to the ground. Is it listening to the moderates?"

Janaki gave her a glance, half fascinated, half suspicious.

"*Why* are you so sympathetic with my country?" she demanded.

"Because your country is striving after the noblest human ideal."

"You will lose friends by this," ventured Janaki, thinking of John Game, Home Secretary.

"You mean in the House," replied Joan. "Oh, father has always taken those risks. And we shall gain better ones," she added affectionately.

Janaki looked at her, dumb. She seemed an incredible person, and yet sincerity sat in her face and rang in her voice.

"You ought to be a nun," said the Rani. "You are capable of renouncing all. I envy you," she added wistfully.

"A nun? Oh no," laughed Joan. "No cloisters for me! I am for the open road."

"The open road," mused the other. "Is that the best place for a woman?"

"Ah, dear Rani, you think too much in the East of the difference between men and women," Joan told her; and Janaki found nothing with which to meet this point.

So in their talks it was always Janaki who deprecated rashness, who talked of British protection and Western civilisation, and even of security of investment as a compensation for the alien rule, Janaki who cried,

"We could not defend ourselves for half a day!"—and Joan who scoffed at material benefits and upheld the gospel of self-expression, and self-government, at their afternoon teas. It was Janaki who explained and excused and postponed, yet never quite successfully, never quite effectively. Indeed, ostensible apologist as she was, she brought always more evidence to damage than plea to extenuate, and Joan Mills' cheeks flamed longer after a visit to the house in Park Street than after any gathering of pleaders and journalists who poured their tale of honeyed grievance into the ear of her father. Janaki made her feel a foreigner indeed, and not only to the country and the people about her, but to the men of her own race who governed it. . . . Among whom John Game was no exception.

And it was the Rani Janaki who took Miss Mills to the "Ladies' League" party at the house of Mrs. Maybird, wife of the Hon. Mr. Justice Maybird, a colleague of Sir Kristodas. Janaki was a member of the "Ladies' League," which she explained as they drove to Mrs. Maybird's, the crimson and gold liveries of the King's Supreme Judiciary decking the carriage before and behind.

"I do not know why, but suddenly they decided they would know us," she told Joan. "The ladies of Calcutta, the burra-mems. They found they had a duty not only to those who go about like me, but to all the little ladies who keep purdah. It was very kind. They consulted some of us, and we agreed to join and persuade our friends. You will see."

"It doesn't sound *real*," said Joan, who had no desire to find it real; and Janaki, smiling, repeated—

"It was very kind."

Mrs. Maybird's guests, though of two races, were of

only one sex. The "little ladies who kept purdah," and came in closed carriages, had nothing to fear from the eye of man. They were there already, some of them, when the Rani Janaki and Miss Mills arrived, sitting about, shy and silent, in the drawing-room, or exchanging short smiling confidences in undertones. There were also, and in greater number, ladies of Janaki's own emancipated social status who wore her dress and had looked in their way upon the world. And in greater number still there were Anglo-Indian ladies, very charmingly attired, who sat or stood, or hovered among the others, attempting, with more or less success, to engage them in conversation.

"Oh, how do you do, Rani," said Mrs. Maybird in the hall of her house, with unaffected welcome. "I am *so* glad to see you. You will help me out, won't you?"

Janaki introduced Joan.

"I am sure it is going delightfully," she said.

"How kind of you to say so!" replied her hostess, with a rueful glance into the drawing-room. "But to me everybody seems more dead than alive. I am terrified to go in there myself," she laughed.

Mrs. Maybird wore a preoccupied and anxious look, and her movements were impeded by two little boys. She indicated them.

"I thought they would be a help," she said. "Something to talk about, you know. But one asks, 'And how many have *you*?' and there one sticks."

"But they are all quite happy," laughed Janaki. "Don't be distressed, dear Mrs. Maybird."

"The refreshments," continued Mrs. Maybird imploringly, "are in the room opposite—our kinds and their kinds—and there are games arranged in the garden. If you *could* get somebody to do something!" and she

turned to welcome the Maharani of Panchperganna, dressed by Paquin, and just back from placing her third boy at Eton, who entered cheerily.

"How do do, Mrs. Maybird! I hope you are going strong. And how are the kiddies?"

Joan turned astonished eyes upon Janaki, who smiled quietly.

"It is another example," she said, "of what you have been able to develop in us. An example in high life. The Maharani is very fond of London. The Maharaja likes Paris better, I am told. I will introduce you to her. I know her very well."

They moved into the luminous and rustling track of the Maharani, who stayed Janaki by the elbow; and presently the ceremony was accomplished.

"Well, you clever girl, and what new language are you learning just now?" demanded the Maharani of Janaki—"Russian, perhaps? They say it is the most difficult, so, of course, you will like it best!"

The Maharani spoke without a hint of malice. Chaff bubbled naturally to her lips, and the learning of Janaki was an old jest between them. But this afternoon something—Joan's presence, perhaps—made the Rani sensitive.

"No, Maharani Sahiba," she answered formally, "I do not think Russian will ever be popular with us here. It is difficult, as you say, and impracticable."

The Maharani's heart was kind, and her head was clever. Her temper was also quick, and she was not accustomed to snubs.

"Right you are, Raniji," she said, and patted Janaki on the shoulder. "It's Japanese that's fashionable nowadays. What I meant to say was, how are you getting on with your Japanese, eh?"

Janaki went a little grey.

"I do not study that language either," she replied.

"Well, well, we mustn't tease you," laughed the Maharani. "This is your first visit to Calcutta, isn't it, Miss Mills? Tell your father not to believe too much what the Babus say. They are suffering from the complaint of wind in the head;" and with a farewell nod the Maharani of Panchperganna continued her assured progress through the room.

Mrs. Maybird crossed, as it were, a sea of troubles to intercept them.

"Do tell me, Rani," she said. "Those three ladies near the piano—are they *all* Mrs. Chatterji?"

The three ladies were certainly very much alike, and occupied chairs close together as if desirous to preserve an identity that separation might destroy.

"They are a mother and two daughters," said Janaki smiling. "Mrs. Chatterji, Mrs. Roy, and Mrs. C. K. Ghose."

"Oh dear! You do marry young, don't you? Well, dear Rani, don't you think you could persuade them to move? Tell them it isn't dangerous in the garden!"

"I will try," said Janaki, and took steps in that direction, but stopped short of Mrs. Chatterji and her daughters.

"Let us sit down," she said to Joan, "and look at it. I want you to see the importance of what these kind ladies are doing."

Joan looked at her with the sudden thought, "Why is *she* so bitter?" It seemed that for the Rani Janaki at least the kind ladies, here and elsewhere, had accomplished something appreciable. But she did not pause to weigh it, having nothing, indeed, to weigh it against.

So they sat, in a nook a little apart, and looked on ; and Janaki watched the face of her English friend. The Anglo-Indian ladies moved about with painstaking friendliness ; and now and then, in response to an invitation, one or two of the Indian ones would rise and follow them obediently in the direction of the refreshments. The Indian faces were all polite, and smiled responsively ; but they spoke little English. Topics were plainly difficult to find, and the air was full of pauses.

"Not an Englishwoman in the room understands Bengali," said Janaki, "and their Hindustani—poor dear ladies—it is of the kitchen."

Joan compressed her lips.

"When we met at *your* house," they overheard Mrs. Maybird exclaim enviously to a friend, "there was quite a buzz of conversation."

"Poor dear Mrs. Maybird," said Janaki.

"There seems to be very little in common," Joan ventured.

"What can they have in common," said Janaki, "the ladies of the zenana and the ladies of the gymkhana? But, yes, there is one thing. That is politics. Every Bengali woman in this room is in her way a politician. But, naturally, they will not speak of that."

"*Naturally?*" exclaimed Joan. "Is any one afraid to talk politics, under the British flag?"

"We will say that they are shy," said Janaki. "But wait——"

Mrs. Maybird and the hostess of the buzz of conversation were persuading a young Indian lady to sing.

"A Bengali song," entreated Mrs. Maybird.

"It is Mrs. Das," said Janaki. "She both composes and sings. She is famous for it."

All the Bengali ladies looked at Mrs. Das with sudden interest, and having won her consent, Mrs. Maybird and her friend took chairs at a polite and expectant distance. Suddenly from her immobile little person, where it sat, the song began to issue, rather a cry than a song, harsh and plaintive. Two or three of her sister-guests exchanged half-frightened glances; the rest looked with covert smiles at the floor, the lips of one or two moved in unison. The song went on and on, mounting and waning; a sombre light came in the eye of the singer. When it was over, something like a sigh lifted the bosoms that had understood, but it was lost in the complacent applause of the Anglo-Indian ladies. The Rani Janaki turned her head away and laughed.

"What was it—the song?" asked Joan.

"It was a patriotic song," Janaki told her, laughing again. "An impossible song. I would not translate it to you for the world."

"Really!" exclaimed Joan. "How courageous! I wish you would introduce me to Mrs. Das."

Which Janaki did with pleasure, and the swift reflection—

"She condones this outrage—she approves it! Truly she need not be spared."

They came away soon after that, and Janaki, as they drove home, observed—

"They are all of the families of moderates, those ladies."

"Even the one who sang?" asked Joan.

"Oh yes. She has several relatives in the Civil Service. Their husbands and fathers are moderates—

but they sing," said Janaki significantly. "I, too, am a moderate, and I do not even sing. I think," she added in a lower tone—and Joan could not see her face for a fold of her sari—"that I have lost my voice."

CHAPTER XII

THE whirl of the cold weather went on, but in spite of the best efforts of the Foleys and John Game Calcutta refused to expand for the Socialist leader at the Grand Hotel. Vulcan clung, a little ostentatiously, to his original intention of avoiding officials; and after one or two tentative advances the administrative world with few exceptions shrugged its shoulders and went about its very arduous affairs, taking no further notice of him than was thrust upon it by the press. Even among bureaucrats, however, there will ever be two or three of imagination; and these did exchange occasionally a serious word upon the situation fomenting about Mills. In the Commissioner of Police there is also necessarily one of experience, and Beauchamp watched the signs hopefully, often using his favourite maxim, "Let the poppyheads grow." But the majority, secure in an authority unquestioned since the day they were gazetted, dipped their noses again into their office files with the imperturbable conviction that it was no special concern of theirs.

Nor did the Mills' circle of general acquaintance greatly widen. Vulcan had consented—pressed by Ganendra Thakore—to write his name as a formal mark of respect in the visitors' book at Government House; but when the inscription was brought to his notice the Viceroy, a nobleman of simple social views, is reported to have said, "Confound the fellow! Why

should I dine him? He does nothing but make trouble for me;" and His Excellency's view was applauded. Personal curiosity about the two—represented at its most stalwart by Mrs. Livingstone Hooper—faded and died away at the spectacle of their amity with the "natives," and irritation took its place, fed daily with fresh instances of the Socialist's criticism, and more flamboyant declarations of his sympathy reported in the papers.

Even the ripple of interest that eddied about Joan subsided into the contemptuous dislike excited by her father, and John Game in a world of men had no rivals for her favour. In the clubs they laughed a good deal at Game, until the explanation of the sophisticated Beauchamp began to get about. John kept his own counsel, kept it so well that gradually Beauchamp's explanation gained ground; so much so that one plain-spoken exponent of gunnies button-holed him saying, "I hear you are making all the running with Mills. When are you going to get the animal out of the country?"

But, partly because of her very true affection, and partly because of her hopes for John Game, Mrs. Michael Foley took every opportunity that was possible of seeing Joan. There were no more dinners to the Member for Further Angus in Camac Street. Lucy, in spite of her husband's protests, tried once again; but Vulcan explained roundly to his daughter that he had a better use for his time, which Mrs. Foley, when Joan translated it to her, accepted as the reward of virtue. Lucy then begged Joan to come alone, and occasionally she did; but their common opportunity lay in odd lunches and drives taken together when a spare hour presented itself in Miss Mills' consecrated day.

Even Mrs. Foley, however, as the days of January went by, began to feel that Vulcan's visit had lasted long enough; and it was with some dismay that she heard his daughter announce a still further extension of it.

"Father says," Joan told her—they were driving along the Strand—"that Mr. Thakore is bound to get a heavy sentence and bound to appeal. If the appeal is granted he says we must stay through the hearing of it."

"What good does he think he can do?" asked Lucy incautiously.

"He says Mr. Thakore is more likely to get fair play if he stays," Joan responded simply.

Mrs. Foley almost bounded forward in her seat.

"*Joan!* How can you think such things! How can you say them if you do think them! Do you really suppose that anybody's presence or absence could make one cowrie's worth of difference?"

"Father stands for the public opinion of England, Lucy."

"It wouldn't matter to the High Court of Calcutta if he stood for the public opinion of Heaven!" cried Mrs. Foley wrathfully. "And besides—so far as public opinion is concerned—don't you know that in *Calcutta* public opinion the Court is far too lenient with such cases!"

Joan frowned. "Do you mean opinion among the twenty thousand Europeans or the million Bengalis of Calcutta?" she asked.

"I mean opinion among the people who have made the place, and keep it," retorted Lucy; and Joan smiled in reply—

"How you always, always shirk the issue, dear."

The appearance of the Viceregal outriders trotting ahead of the Viceregal carriage, red and gold and pennons flying, momentarily suspended the argument for Mrs. Foley, and when their Excellencies, with a pleasant greeting, had rolled by, she did not resume it. Lucy had long acknowledged the hopelessness of contesting certain views of her friend, and moreover her mind was occupied with one of those immediate personal matters which were apt, with Mrs. Foley, to obscure questions of merely abstract importance.

"But won't Mr. Mills be obliged to get home for the election?" she asked, still revolving the best way of broaching the other thing.

"Our people are urging him, of course. But father thinks they can't possibly go to the country before the end of March—there is certain business that must be got through with first, and he believes it will take longer than the Government think. Besides, he is rather glad of a good reason for leaving the work of this campaign to the younger men of our party, men like Howard Innes and Philip Dream. India is a very good reason. Now that father has taken up India——"

"I thought," interrupted Mrs. Foley, "that Howard Innes was leader of the Practical Socialists—isn't there a difference——"

"We're all practical at election time," said Joan smiling. "Innes has sometimes given trouble, but not when big issues are before the people."

"And I suppose your father's own seat is quite safe?" said Lucy.

"Quite safe. Father's constituency would vote for him blindfold. But he means to be back, of course, by the time the writs are issued."

They had left the sun behind, dropping into the

west across the river, and the coachman was walking the horses back along the populous route that divides Calcutta and her muddy Hooghly. The Strand was full of carriages going and coming, and in the carriages languid bowing white faces, or brown ones that did not bow but occasionally salaamed profusely to one another—two tides that did not mingle. Pedestrians, mostly indigenous, were many too, almost multitudinous, half hidden in the dust of the Maidan, so many as to mingle with it and be inconspicuous. Lower down a steamer had been coaling, and along the footpath on the riverside trooped some scores of blackened coolies, each in his rag of loin-cloth, chattering and gesticulating as they pressed on to the shelter and the meal that stood for their share of life. On the other side a solitary Secretary to the Government of India skirted the Maidan in his evening walk. Mrs. Foley's eye rested on the grimy coolies, and travelled from them to the Englishman, who lifted his hat. She smiled a little at Joan's expense, thinking of public opinion in Calcutta, but what she said had another bearing.

"Joan dear, if I tell you something, shall you mind?"

"Not a bit in the world."

"Well, it's about your Babu friend——"

"Which one?" asked Joan tolerantly. "I should think we had twenty."

"You have twenty thousand, I imagine, if it comes to counting. But you only drive with one."

"You mean Mr. Dey," said Joan with composure.

"Yes. He is rather strikingly good-looking, isn't he—Mr. Dey? Those delicate, regular, aquiline features are quite the best Bengali type, I think."

"Why place him in a type?" demanded Joan. "I

suppose if he is good-looking he is just good-looking as a human being, isn't he? One would think we were here to measure the skulls of these people."

"Oh, but we have! The Government carried out an ethnographical survey some time ago. I know the man who did it. Why shouldn't we measure their heads? It doesn't hurt them."

"It only lacked that," returned Joan bitterly.

"It didn't lack it. But about Mr. Dey—you're not altogether hideous yourself, you know——"

"I never thought I was."

"And—you promised not to mind—it's a little conspicuous, Joan."

"My appearance—or Mr. Dey's—or both together?"

"Exactly," Lucy caught her up. "Your appearance together. The fact is, dear," she urged, "if you must go about with a Babu it really ought to be an old Babu. You'll be perfectly furious at the mere idea of such a thing, I know, but people will suppose that this young Dey is—making up to you."

"I'm not in the least furious," said Joan calmly. "There is no reason that I know of why Mr. Dey should not make up to me, if he had any inclination to do so. But he has shown nothing of the sort. And as to what people may suppose——"

"I know," said Mrs. Foley hastily. "You don't care. But Michael made me promise to say something. Of course I knew it was to the last degree absurd. You would never tolerate——"

"I wish you had the least, faintest idea, Lucy, of what is in the hearts and minds of these people." Joan told her. "Bepin has *no* thought but his country."

She spoke with sincerity, but looked across the river where the factory chimneys of her countrymen were

staining the sunset sky, and the cheek she turned from her companion had ever so faint a flush.

"I am thankful to hear it! But, Joan—do you call him *Bepin*?"

"Naturally. We are very great friends."

Lucy was silent. She simply dared not ask whether *Bepin* was allowed to reciprocate.

The coachman touched his pair, and the landau rolled smartly into the press of traffic at the end of the river drive. Before them rose the palms of the Eden Gardens, where, to a collection of carriages, the band was discoursing.

"Shall we go and listen for a little while?" suggested Mrs. Foley. "It's the Viceroy's band to-night, I think; and, as a rule, you can depend upon them not to play selections from the organ-grinders."

"Do they ever play Indian music?" asked Joan, as Lucy gave the order.

"Oh no. Our instruments aren't adapted to it."

"It is what I am beginning very strongly to think," said Joan provocatively. "Whatever our instruments produce in India, it isn't music."

Little Mrs. Foley reflected for an instant as the carriage pulled into line.

"I'm not clever enough to argue about it, but I think Michael would say that we're not here altogether for that purpose," she said; and Joan Mills, whether she found the reply to the point or not, had no answer for it but a sigh.

There was a pause, filled with Brahms and the band; and then Joan said suddenly—

"You know, Lucy—father and I have resolved to dedicate ourselves to India?"

"Really?"

"Yes, we have. She is so friendless—India. And so misunderstood. Father has even begun Hindustani, with a munshi, a very clever man."

"But—when he is going so soon?"

"He says it won't be time wasted, even if he only gets hold of—"

"An Arabic root," murmured Lucy.

"The main principles of the language. And I—may not be going so soon."

Mrs. Foley turned with a little gasp. Had John, then, put his fortunes to the test? And had Joan found some inexplicable, impersonal, moral reason for making it good? She caught her friend's hand.

"Why—Joan!"

"A delightful Brahmo family want me to stay and live with them."

"For ever?" asked Lucy aghast.

"For as long as I will. There are two daughters, quite young girls, a mother, a widowed aunt, and a grandmother, and the idea is that I should teach—"

"The grandmother!"

"Don't laugh, Lucy. It's very near my heart. The idea is that I should bring them all that I can of the best of Western ideas, and that they should teach me the beautiful old philosophy of their faith—a faith which has adopted Christ—"

"My dear Joan!"

"And I should wear their dress and perform their sacrifices," Joan went on, and Brahms seemed dreamily to accompany her, "and sit with them in the twilight on the house-top, and listen under the stars to the talk of holy men. And in the practical daylight hours I would show them what I could out of school-books, and try to lift their narrow horizon as women, and through

it all—through it all—would run the ministry of love.”

Mrs. Foley’s instant of silence was as much a tribute to the feeling with which Joan spoke, as a means of suppressing many things that sprang to her own lips to say.

“Yes, dear. But your father? What will he do without you?”

“Of course I have consulted father, and of course it is a sacrifice for him. But he will make it—for India. Besides, in the only sense that matters, he will not lose me. We will be together still—he fighting the battle in the House of Commons, I lifting up the weary arms of some passionate priest out here. It is all I ask.”

Lucy drew in her breath.

“And all your modern strenuous life of movement and reform. What will you do without it?”

“As for my life of committes and campaigning at home, I am a little tired of it, Lucy. Such things have their uses; but compared with a nation’s awakening they are like the beating of a nursery drum. Looking back, it is all tawdry and feverish, full of expediency and vulgarity. I love the larger peace and the deeper dream of India.”

The band ceased, and the curious soft silence spread about them that falls with evening upon Calcutta. Now and then a horse shifted restlessly with a clink of harness, or a crow, settling on his branch for the night, cawed a raucous protest against intrusion; but there was hardly any other sound. A hawker of button-hole bouquets offered his basket from carriage to carriage. The scent of his tube roses and jasmine wandered through the still air, and his voice sounded timid and tentative in the quiet. The palms of the gardens stood

theatrically in the electric light, which burnished the importance of the policeman who moved about regulating the ranks of the carriages. Further out in one direction the circle showed a dim funnel or two, and died away in another toward the jewelled expanse of the Maidan. Within it stood saliently the white marble figure of a British admiral who once brought his blue-jackets and their cutlasses up the river, and now seemed to contemplate, not without criticism, the scene he had helped to save for his country.

Joan leaned back in the carriage, steeping her senses in the languor of the night. She lifted a cluster of jasmine from the hawker's basket, dropping him a coin that was four times its price, and closed her eyes under the spell of it. Lucy, beside her, sat erect and a little alarmed, struggling with a sort of antagonism that might easily dictate a hopelessly wrong word. For the moment she could find for her friend no word at all, and she addressed a crisp order to the coachman instead. The two sat in silence as the carriage made its way towards the mysterious spaces of the Maidan; but as it swung out into them, a sudden suspicion visited the mind of Mrs. Foley.

"Joan," she said pointedly, "do these people belong in any way to that Babu?"

"They are friends of Bepin's," Joan told her, with the jasmine still at her lips, "but the family is quite closely related to Ganendra Thakore."

CHAPTER XIV

VULCAN MILLS no doubt saw the dedication of his future activities to the cause of India somewhat less simply than his daughter did. He had past dedications to consider. But he was a man singularly without personal ambition in politics. He tramped after his ideal wherever he saw it, tramped after it in the same old heavy boots. It had led him into Socialist caucuses and lifted him into a Socialist leadership with little practical assistance from himself. "Unpractical" indeed was the stone they found to throw at him when upon some point fantastically easy to concede his dome-like forehead shone intractable, and he backed his own view with a threat of resignation. He belonged, emphatically, to the earlier emergence of the socialistic idea, before it had learned the necessity of compromise or the value of business methods, when the voice in the wilderness carried all before it, and organisation was as irrelevant as quadratics. Even now, if he had realised that the machine was overtaking the apostle, he would simply have stepped out of its way, and gone on searching the stars from some other place. He had, of course, no such idea of the fate of the apostle, being altogether unprovided with a cynical outlook upon human affairs; but that would have been his inclination. So that in taking the "cause of India" into his knapsack he was embarrassed by no selfish thought of inconvenience from the added burden.

Rather he transferred it, with generous confidence, to the shoulders of his party. He would offer without hesitation another enthusiasm to the mill-hands of Further Angus ; and it had always been the limitation of his prophetic vision to see his country in the dimensions of his constituency.

Vulcan's knapsack was already so full that I doubt whether he would have added another cause to it, however appealing, that came under his notice in abstract form. Had he stayed at home he would have met the demand of the Indian agitators with the sympathy he had for anybody who, at the expense of any Government, wanted anything ; but it would have come with the pale persuasion of a theoretic claim. He might be more than inclined to admit its justice, but there would always be the irritating case for authority ; and six thousand miles would remain between, throwing everything out of perspective. He would have listened with indignation to any far-away grievance—the further away the more likely—and voted with moral assurance in the direction of its relief ; but he would not have been tempted to make it his own.

But Vulcan's long-contemplated journey had made all the difference. It had brought him to the heart of a political romance where a knight was clearly needed, a mailed fist, with a pipe in it, and no nonsense about it, to take the part of inarticulate millions. He came to it out of a world of prosaic engagements, mean streets, and wet umbrellas, and he brought with him a capacity for sentiment which was like the thirst of a lifetime. Vulcan's heart, so wary a campaigner among political hostesses, yielded straight to direct assault, naïvely conducted by persons who knelt at his feet and threw garlands about his neck. He was suspicious of his own countrymen in

every quarter of the globe, but he had no distrust for these. Accustomed all his life as he was to hard chances and reserved faces, they took him with gentleness and eulogy. What Vulcan's political admirers called "that great big heart of his" responded with great big throbs to the affectionate advances of his Bengali friends. No one, not even Joan, not even he himself, had ever guessed how he had always hungered for just such outward and visible signs. He had his vanity too, which, though he did not fail to check it by the facts, had never been such a pleasure to him before. Thus, when they told him he was a god, he shook his agnostic head and asked them to prove it * * *

So the dream and the incense gained on him, and every day he learned a new syllable of the drama about him and was happier than he had been since he was a boy. He ate strange foods and submitted to strange customs, and let his imagination revel in the ancient mystery of the civilisation to which he proposed to bring the eventual supreme gift of the ballot. His obligations to the foggy island in the North Atlantic grew lighter in their remoteness; his heart had suffered a sea change. He discarded none of them, but there was a musical tourist who sang a hymn of Kipling's in the hotel drawing-room, and for days thereafter Vulcan would murmur in his beard—

"Beefy face an' grubby 'and,
Lord, wot do they understand?"

And when Hammond, Secretary to the State Socialist Union, and Vulcan's most useful supporter, growing uneasy at certain aspects of matters about him, wrote and begged his leader to consider party exigencies, cut short his visit to India and return to deliver the earliest blow in the coming campaign, Mills

replied that he had come out to educate himself in Indian problems and could not consent to do it by halves. Three months in Calcutta was the shortest time in which he could hope to master them. He would leave the earliest blows to Howard Innes and Philip Dream, though he thought he might very well be back in time to get in some of the later ones. Now Hammond was a paid official with a large family, and did not find himself justified in warning Vulcan directly that, judging by certain unreported speeches, neither Innes nor Dream were men to yield place to at such a moment. However, he wrote again, and more strongly, basing his remonstrance upon the general disapproval of Vulcan's "line" in India which had begun to be evinced by the press without distinction of party. What Hammond called the "growl" of the *Times* had encouraged lesser Government journals to bark, and the sound was unmistakably critical. Perhaps the Top had had a good deal to bear in silence from the Bottom in domestic affairs; and what the *London Daily* spiritedly called the "poisonous promenade" of the Bottom's leader in an unrestful Dependency made an opportunity to vent some repressed irritation. Certainly the note was plain in the clippings Hammond enclosed. As to the Liberal Opposition, "They," Hammond wrote, "have been on your back for some time," and enclosed more clippings. Apparently, as the days went on and the cabled descriptions of Mr. Mills' doings grew more picturesque, everybody took heart of grace to condemn them. Even Hammond, in his letter, ventured the possibility that the State Socialist Leader was letting his enthusiasm get a little the better of his judgment. *Vide* enclosures.

Vulcan showed the letter to Joan, and when she

handed it back to him, carefully and pleasantly lighted his pipe with it.

"Hammond's a time-server," he said.

"And as to these," said Joan, indicating the clippings, "how ignorant and narrow, and alarmist they sound!"

"They're just a pack of catch-words," said Mills, and went to see Ganendra Thakore in prison.

Permission had been accorded not without difficulty. Ganendra had almost immediately petitioned to see his distinguished Parliamentary friend, and had been told that he would be allowed visits from his legal advisers only. Vulcan made the same request, and received a copy of the prison regulations, which certainly did not indicate the way to any cell. Both refusals, however, found their natural celebration in the public prints. A few days later Ganendra fell ill, refused his food, and showed an abnormal pulse to the doctor, who transferred him to the prison hospital. This also was published, and Mills formally repeated his request to see an under-trial prisoner in terms that made it a demand. Whereat one or two irritated gentlemen decided that it would be better to yield a point than to court a scandal, and the visit was arranged.

The superintendent, Mr. Peter Falkner, himself, with brief civility, received Mr. Mills at the door. Preceded by a European convict warder with a bunch of keys, they went immediately up to the hospital dormitory.

"He gets ordinary comforts, I suppose—and his food sent in?" observed Mills.

"He is on hospital diet, very carefully watched. And you understand, of course," added the superintendent with a narrow look as they traversed a corridor,

"that nothing, absolutely nothing, is to pass from you to the prisoner."

"I shall give him a grip o' my hand," said Vulcan, "and nothing else."

"The bed in the corner, sir," said the warder; and the superintendent led the way to it.

Ganendra lay quite immovable; the long straight ridge under the Cawnpore blanket on the bed in the corner might have been the line of a corpse. Only the eyes, brilliantly alive and alight, fastened on the heavy figure of his visitor and travelled with the group as it approached. The bed appeared to Vulcan to stand out from the others like the pallet of a prophet. The light that fell on it from the barred window high in the wall of the prison was accidental, but seemed symbolical. Vulcan had kept his hat on in the corridors; now, with a serious gesture, he took it off.

The two men walked up to the bed together, and Vulcan, without a word, held out his hand. Ganendra raised himself on his elbow and brought both of his to his forehead in a double salaam, to his jailor and to his visitor. Then he took that of Vulcan and looked up mutely, tears in his eyes.

"Well, how goes it, Babu?" said the superintendent.

"I am doing very well, thank you," replied Ganendra, but he looked backed instantly at Vulcan.

"How can I express to you my gratitude for this?" he said.

"Don't express it," replied Vulcan.

The moment was charged with emotion. In the discomfort of it the superintendent stood first upon one foot and then upon the other.

"Are you comfortable?" asked Mills.

"Everything in Mr. Falkner's power is done to

make me so," said Ganendra, looking gratefully at the superintendent.

Falkner nodded at the warder.

"Get this gentleman a chair," he said, "and bring him back to my office in twenty minutes. You may like to have a look round," he said to Vulcan. "Not that my jail has any special features, but it's fairly up to the average."

"I'd like very well to take a look round your jail," said Vulcan, "but this is the gentleman I've come to see," he added, as Falkner, with a word to the warder, left the dormitory.

Ganendra watched him out in silent impatience.

"Now," he said, "I can speak all that is in my heart. I was most anxious—most anxious—to see you. I have a matter to confide to you, very delicate, very personal——"

Vulcan took the chair the warder brought.

"Lie down," he said. "Don't excite yourself. You may confide anything in the world to me."

"I was sure of that."

Ganendra dropped his head again upon the pillow, and Mills noted how much greyer the short curling hair had grown, and how the bones had pushed out under the brown skin.

But his eyes had become suddenly dry and bright and anxious.

"I took your advice, my friend," he said significantly from his pillow.

Vulcan's glance sharpened ever so slightly, and Ganendra put up a deprecating hand.

"Oh, it was the counsel of my own heart also," he said quickly. "I could not have done otherwise. But I have your approval. Is it not so?"

"I would have done the same in your place," said Vulcan, honestly thinking that he would.

"Then we are one in spirit. And you too would have paid the price rejoicing, as I will pay it—rejoicing."

Vulcan shifted a little in his seat, and thrust his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat.

"We don't know yet what that price is to be. It'll be a Privy Council matter to settle, I'm thinking."

"No appeal lies to the Privy Council except on a point of law," said Ganendra rapidly, "and the Court will not be caught this time. There is no question of the facts and no question of the law. I shall defend myself, with advice. I shall attack the law. I think my voice will be heard for many years in this country, long after I have gone to rot in the Andamans. They might hang me, but they will be afraid. I shall probably get the next penalty; I shall go for life. I do not say it will be long. If I press for an appeal—about that I have not made up my mind—even here, it will only be to keep the matter before the public. For myself—" He stopped to cough.

"But your family?" said Vulcan, with a touch of admonition, when the paroxysm was over.

"My family is—one son. And he is not my child not even by adoption—a young man not even of my caste! He is Bepin Behari Dey."

Ganendra's thin fingers twisted and untwisted the grey jail blanket, but his eyes never left his visitor's face. Strength had come into his voice.

"The son of my own soul and body died—crushed by the machine. It is for Bepin that I wished to speak with you—to plead with you."

"But I love him as if he were my own lad," said

Vulcan, luxuriating in the unaccustomed vocabulary of the emotions.

"I think God put that into your mouth to say!" exclaimed Ganendra, and leaned out to lay a gentle hand upon Mills' knee.

"Let me tell you quite frankly everything. I fear to leave Bepin. You know his burning heart. He is young, and mad for this old Gunga-mai—this Ganges-mother of ours. Always I have restrained him, but now when they send me away I do not know into what violence——"

Vulcan nodded.

"I see the danger," he said. "And it would be a pity, for within constitutional limits he could be of splendid service to his country."

"It is the very truth. And he adores his country. There is but one that he adores more than his country."

Mr. Mills glanced at Ganendra shrewdly, took his meaning, smiled and shook his head.

"If I know the one you refer to I'm afraid there's been many before him," he said.

The tension in the Indian's face relaxed, and a look of relief took its place. The matter could then be discussed. It was new ground to Ganendra; he had feared some dim echo of his own thousand Brahminical scruples and repulsions, something that would lose the field before the battle had been begun. He closed his eyes and moved his lips in words that Vulcan would not have understood if they had been spoken. Then he looked again at the Englishman by his bed.

"My friend," he said, "give her to India."

For an instant Vulcan had no response, bewildered by the passion of the man, and perhaps a little by the

demand. He put one hand carefully on either knee and blinked at Ganendra in silence.

"The boy has confessed wholly to me," Ganendra hurried on; "I am a kind of spiritual guide to him, as you know. He came to me weeping and said the flame within him was no longer pure; it was mixed with love. He was sad and terrified, expecting my curse. Instead of that I blessed him. I saw in it the hand of God to preserve him. To preserve him, I mean, from his own reckless impulses."

"I think even her friendship might do that," observed Vulcan.

"Friendship," repeated Ganendra blankly. "At their age? How is it possible? We do not understand that in India. Dear friend, my boy wishes to marry your daughter."

"Do you think it's gone as far as that?" asked Vulcan. He looked, confronted with the actual instead of the jocular possibility, very blank, and not altogether pleased.

"I know it absolutely. I speak for him. Himself, he would not dare to lift his eyes. But I have told him, 'This father of your goddess is no common father. To him all men are of one race—Mahadeo has given him same-sightedness. He will ask not what is your colour? what is your creed? but what are your morals and ideals?' I ask you, sir—was I not right?"

"To a certain extent, yes," confessed Vulcan. "But there are practical considerations——"

Practical considerations were the last things that would ordinarily have occurred to him, but he caught at them in his embarrassment like any banker or broker.

"Yes, yes—of course," Ganendra shifted his ground in a flash, "and there the way is fortunately plain. Bepin

is well-born. His family have been land-holders for hundreds of years, and one of his ancestors held office under Suraj-ud-Dowlah in the days when the British were a foot on the Hooghly. His near relatives are few, and Bepin will have the land, but meanwhile there will be no money difficulties—none! For the purposes of this marriage I shall myself execute a deed in his favour, before I leave these walls, for ten lakhs of rupees.”

“That is very generous,” blinked Vulcan.

“Not generous at all—what is money to me? I shall never spend another pice! And I have been very fortunate lately. Let him take all I can give him, and carry on the cause. And with your daughter to guide him, restrain him, and inspire him, to what point might he not carry that cause? My friend, let us make this political marriage. For me the door will soon be shut, but you will see—great things——”

Another fit of coughing shook him, which he struggled painfully to repress. Vulcan, with a face of compassion, laid a hand on his emaciated shoulder. Stilling himself, Ganendra caught at the kindly hand.

“Give her to India,” he repeated weakly. Then indistinctly, “This is Kaliyuga.* The gods ask sacrifice; and ours are not enough. This is Kaliyuga.”

He stopped short and put his hand to his lips.

“What have I been saying? They would live in European style and be very happy.”

Vulcan sat serious and silent, and for the first time Ganendra let him have the advantage in their talk. The Brahmin seemed to have made his effort, and lay back spent upon his pillow.

“As far as I can give my girl,” Mills said slowly,

* The black age.

"she is already given to this country. She will not return to England with me. She has accepted the invitation of the Roy ladies, and will begin with them, I hope, a career of some usefulness to the women of India."

"Ah—I hoped for that. I am very glad."

"She is my offering to your cause—and she is all I have."

"God will reward you," said the other feebly.

"More than that—though you are right in thinking that I have no prejudices—I cannot say, Mr. Thakore." Mills spoke slowly and gently, as if to a child. "My daughter must choose her own husband."

Ganendra's eyes were fixed upon the warder, approaching from the other end of the dormitory.

"I will send word to Bepin," he said almost indifferently, and put an exhausted hand in Vulcan's.

"Time's up, sir," said the warder.

There had just been time.

CHAPTER XV

CALCUTTA danced and raced. Ganendra lay in the jail hospital with pneumonia, and a hundred thousand people hung upon the doctor's daily word to the reporters; but Calcutta was otherwise occupied. The red hibiscus bushes waved gaily in the sun over the stucco garden walls, and the season's *débutantes* achieved their curtseys at Their Excellencies' Drawing-room, and jute fluctuated and coal went higher, and nobody but John Game and one or two others, including the eternally watchful Beauchamp, had time to notice that a sudden quietude had descended upon the suburbs and the bazars. Since the arrest of Ganendra no more meetings had been attempted, the students had gone back to their lectures; and the wind might have swept the city streets without turning a single revolutionary leaflet. The mill-hands and dock labourers trooped to their work; the market hummed, the Rajah of Kolapatta gave an expensive garden-party with attractions from the touring circus, and invited five hundred ladies and gentlemen out of the Calcutta Directory. Even the fever of the Indian papers seemed to have abated. Their constant attacks upon the policy of Government gave place to long articles upon the India of ancient poetry and fable; and references to modern politics and high officials were wrapped in parallels from religious mythology which nobody took the trouble to follow up.

"Why in the world they should compare me to

Ravana," complained Lord Campden, "I don't know. I never ran away with anybody."

Sir Robert Farquhar, Home Member, chuckled at the sudden change.

"Nothing like pulling these fellows up sharp," he said. "Letting them see that we mean business. Mark my words—the confiscation of the *Lamp of Youth* will be a landmark in the history of this country, and the transportation of Ganendra Thakore, if he lives to go, will be another. We've seen the worst of it."

He was a man who loved a quiet life and spoke as he would fain hope. John Game, his senior lieutenant, was less confident. He looked steadily at the signs of the times, talked more than ever with his Indian friends, and weighed the matter of despatches in long, solitary walks. One thing in particular oppressed him, and that was the discovery that for him the question on every lip was of faded significance. It seemed incredible that he should be obliged constantly to dress it up in its Imperial importance and place it before himself with all its claims to attention—that it should not occupy his whole vision and claim his whole mind as it would have done at any other moment in the last twenty years. He found himself, to his astonishment, looking at the political situation with the philosophy of a spectator, and the limited patience of a person to whom the scene is irrelevant and the actors are alien. The late awakening of his blood brought with it a sense of long denial and deprivation, and a keen desire to savour the natural human lot of a man at home in the world. His twenty years of service in this far country stretched back twenty years of servitude upon husks. Not in so many words. What he said to himself as he took his evening walk round the Fort was,

"It's no great catch, after all, the Indian Civil," but he was thinking of the husks. Perhaps, too, he had an uneasy feeling that the administrative garb his spirit wore was far from furthering his hopes. He could never change it, but he may now and then have surveyed this livery with a critical eye. And apply himself as he might to the clauses of a Universities' Bill, or the scope of fresh regulations for the police, he would find himself counting the years that stood between him and retirement, and speculating eagerly upon what he could do with the life that lay after. He grew sick and angry at the new polarity of his mind, suspected his passion of playing a trick with his manhood, and promised himself to make an end of it one way or another by asking Joan Mills to marry him the next time he saw her. If he went on seeing her without asking her it was because of his increasing conviction that there was only one way, and not another, in which an end of it could be made.

It is also possible that Game hesitated for another reason. Vulcan's plain antagonism to the civil administration, his more and more sympathetic attitude toward what they called in the offices "the forces of disorder," was making a situation in which a Home Secretary as a postulant son-in-law would figure with ridicule, if indeed he could figure at all. John had explained the Socialist Leader to his own complete satisfaction. He devoted some time to looking up the history of the party and the emergence of the type; and as a political phenomenon he could account for Mills and even palliate him. But the case simply did not yield to theories at any point. The natural history of a Communist demagogue might be the most natural in the world; but that did not make him any the less

an enemy to the good government of an Oriental dependency. John could explain him, but he could not, unfortunately, explain him away. And the daughter of such a one seemed set about with thorns to a lover lodged in an administration. He could only wait in patience and anxiety from one hour to the next for the date of Vulcan Mills' departure. Once out of the country the man would simplify to a factor in party politics amenable to the conditions of the ignoble fight that went on for ever at Westminster. Here he was dynamite and a match; there he would be a pop-gun in the House of Commons. Once back, full of his undigested experience, on those green benches, he would "ask questions" innumerable. Questions of the Secretary of State. Well, let him ask them for the rest of his natural life. A pop-gun at that range!

And it was a kindness of fate that proposed to leave Joan behind, even in a suspect family of Brahmos. There was nothing for an idealist temperament like hers but time and the fact. With time and the fact her illusions would drop away. One day she would open her beautiful eyes upon the truth, and then, if not before, he would find favour in them. Meanwhile, alone in this house of distorting mirrors, she would need his explanation, perhaps his protection. He almost felt, in his official capacity, as if Vulcan would leave her in his care.

It was an irritating, as well as a ludicrous thing that the subject of his apprehension as Home Secretary should also be the object of his solicitude as would-be son-in-law; but John continued to keep himself very closely informed as to the progress of Vulcan's "mission" in Bengal. With Joan he discussed everything else, but with the Rani Janaki it was different. He had

always talked politics with Janaki. She had given him many a hint of feeling and opinion in circles with which his own points of contact were limited and unproductive. At this very moment, upon a liberalising measure in connection with the universities, into which he had thrown himself without reserve, both she and her father had been particularly helpful and suggestive.

John believed in Janaki's politics—it was natural to believe in them. Her life at Oxford and her father's position placed her above the fevered temptations of a generation just taught to read and write the signs of Western thought. She could hardly be anything but a moderate, but she had all the air of a courageous moderate; and John would often come away with a soothed feeling that for once he had dropped a plummet and taken a sounding. About Mills and his mission Janaki had been particularly intelligent, had shown a wonderful flair—a little alarmist, Game thought; but that was a fault on the expedient side.

Sir Kristodas and his daughter were nearly always to be found in the Judge's library at tea-time on Sunday afternoons; and John had not altered his habit of dropping in. Janaki was grateful to his nerves; and the more depressed he found himself the more naturally he remembered, on a Sunday afternoon, that she would be at home. And it was some time, he remembered, since he had heard her view of Vulcan's progress as a political influence.

As usual, Janaki closed a book as Game entered. She was always expecting him at this hour, therefore she always had a book in her hands. It made his reception easier to say what she had been reading. This time he took her unawares, and the book fell upon the floor. It had been three weeks since his last

visit. She wavered a little as she half rose to meet him.

"You have been ill!" he exclaimed with concern, and taking her hand, he pressed her back gently into her chair. She looked ill. An Englishwoman, looking so ill, would have accused herself of a mortal disease. Her cheeks were sunken, and her skin deepened heavily into black about her eyes, which were lamps in the darkness of her face. She sat mute for an instant under his kindness.

"I am very well, thank you. You have been on the river, I suppose—on Sundays—lately?"

"Not every Sunday, by any means. Work has been piling up, Rani-sahiba."

His voice was friendly to the point of tenderness. He felt very sorry for her, not in the least aware of how sorry he ought to feel. He did not know what to think of her appearance. A woman of his own race would have worn her suffering differently; and he would have suspected her of exhaustion or neuralgia. Janaki looked at once crisped and cold, and her frame seemed bent like a branch under its weight of draperies.

"Have you been having fever?" he asked her seriously.

"Fever? Oh no—I think not. Perhaps a little."

"Have you been sleeping properly?" he persisted, at which she gave him a wan smile and said—

"Yes, yes. Always. I am quite all right, thank you. And you are not the doctor!"

"If I were the doctor," he said, scrutinising her with his kind eyes, "I should put you to bed. I feel distinctly anxious about you. Ah, here is Sir Kristo. Do you really think, sir, that she ought to be about?"

"Janaki? Ah now, Game, I am obliged to you. I

have been recommending her for several days to take some tonic or other—she is eating nothing, I can assure you. But she pays no attention to me. Well, where is my cup of tea? Why, you have no tea! Nothing but cups and saucers!”

“I had forgotten tea,” said Janaki. “But Mr. Game has just come.”

“Well, well, no doubt they are bringing it. Yes, this girl is very troublesome to me just now. You must help me to scold her,” said the Judge fussily.

“I don’t know about scolding,” said John, “but if I could persuade her I would.”

Janaki looked from one to the other of them. At this talk of her looks she had drawn her *sari* a little further forward so that its border fell across her cheek. In its shelter she dropped her eyes and said—

“I am a Hindu widow. I have been doing proper penances—that is all.”

“I shall send you back to England,” threatened her father. “You were always well there.”

“Yes,” Janaki replied, “I was always well there. Here is tea.”

She lifted the teapot and put it down again.

“Show Mr. Game the old Persian pictures,” she said to Sir Kristodas, who got up with alacrity.

“To be sure I will. But whether he will think them as good as I do, that is a different matter! By the merest accident I stumbled on them,” he rejoiced to Game as they crossed the room to a portfolio propped on a chair. “And you may say I snatched them actually from the jaws of the School of Art. The Principal came asking the very next day!”

While the Judge displayed his new treasures Janaki poured out the tea. It splashed into the saucer of one

cup and stained the cloth, but she finally conquered her hand ; and when her father came back, talking of the artists of Delhi under Akbar, it was ready for him.

"I hear that Ganendra Thakore is on the mend," said Sir Kristodas, stirring the sugar in his cup. "Since yesterday. He is now likely to be able to take his trial without further postponement."

"The case is now to come up on the eleventh, I think," said Game attentively. "And before you, I hear."

"To-morrow week. Yes, it is likely, I believe, to come before myself."

"Is it, father?" exclaimed Janaki in a startled voice. "You did not tell me."

"No—why should I worry you as well as myself? Personally I would willingly hand the job over to any of my brother judges. It will be very distasteful to me. I have known the man since his boyhood."

"I suppose it is particularly desirable that a Hindu judge should try the case," said Game, touching a delicate subject with the confidence of an old friend ; "but couldn't Chunder Nath Bose be put on?"

Sir Kristodas shook his head.

"The Chief Justice has transferred that Naringa Raj suit to him, which will last a month ; between ourselves, I believe with this very case in view. Chunder Nath is a sound lawyer, but his nerves have lately gone quite wrong—quite wrong," he added irritably. "The Chief is anxious, for a variety of reasons, that this case should not wait its turn in the ordinary Sessions——"

Game nodded.

"So he has ordered an Extra Sessions and put me on to take it. I protested as strongly as I could, but in

vain. No, the Chief Justice said to me plainly. 'Mukerji,' he said, 'you are the only Hindu in Asia that I would allow to try this case.' I don't know why he said that. And you will oblige me, Game—you will oblige me by not repeating it."

"I will remember it only long enough to agree with his lordship," said Game pleasantly.

"I hear he will conduct his own defence," said Sir Kristodas with increasing gloom.

"It is very injudicious. He will be carried away by emotion and make nothing of the technical points in his favour—if there are any. For his own sake I would much rather hear counsel," he mused aloud, still stirring his untasted tea. Presently he lifted the cup to his lips, drank half of it, put it down, and without another word pattered out of the room.

"I am afraid he is a little upset about this," said Game. His tone was intimate and privileged, and there was something in it beside the words that marked their being alone together. It was pleasant to him to be alone with Janaki. Her atmosphere had balm in it. His senses had never responded to her, but his sensibilities had always acknowledged her charm; and to-day he was more in need of it than usual.

A sudden gentleness came into Janaki's face. It was as if he had caressed her. Her whole bearing relaxed, and her lips took a curve of something like happiness.

"Poor father," she said, "he likes the compliment of being the first Hindu Judge put on to such a case, but I suppose he is torn, like the rest of us."

"Oh no," John said easily, "I can't allow that. You are not torn because a dangerous agitator has come at last within reach of the law?"

She fixed softly tragic eyes on him.

"Do you know what he stands for—Ganendra?" she asked.

"They know in the Criminal Intelligence."

"He stands for the soul of the people," she told him.

"Dear Rani—yes. Perhaps he does. But I think you know as well as I do that he stands for certain other things as well—including a few quite worldly and unscrupulous ambitions."

The Rani Janaki looked at this honest and simple Home Secretary a little as a fascinated bird might look at a beguiling serpent.

"You think—there are others behind him?" she managed to say.

John smiled.

"Men of twice his intelligence, and ten times his drive. Ganendra is astute enough, but his astuteness has been in a way neutralised by his mania of hate. He feeds his anger with his religious fervour, and the real engineers of the movement exploit them both, from the other side of India, and through them what you call the soul of the people. The soul of the people is a very useful political asset. It will nearly always produce—"

"Patriotic songs," put in Janaki, listening with a slightly strained effect of receiving information.

"The necessary assassin," said Game. "May I have some more bread and butter?"

She stared for an instant, then supplied him eagerly.

"Why are you having no tea?" he demanded.

"I had some before you came."

It was not true. She was sitting there on a sofa with springs, behind a Sutherland tea-table and a Queen Anne silver service, feeding him in the spirit of

all her foremothers, who knelt on the floor and ministered to the sovereign male, waiting their turn till long after. At his reminder she poured herself out a cup and broke a biscuit, but nothing passed her lips. When she spoke it was not to refer again to the soul of the people.

"You are going to smoke," she said. "Do smoke. You know you always may."

"You spoil me, Rani," he said, taking out his cigarette case.

"I smoke here, and then at Mrs. Livingstone Hooper's I feel depressed, and sulk. I am glad you don't smoke," he went on, lighting up. "It would be a blow to the imagination."

It was almost as if she had been praised at the expense of Joan Mills. Game spoke forgetfully, and Janaki knew it; but her heart leapt at his words.

She shook her head.

"No," she said. "It does not go with this," and touched the border of her *sari*.

"Do you suspect Naidu?" she asked, with a little difficulty. The man she mentioned was a South Indian politician of the people, famed for his eloquence, and member of a provincial Council.

"We suspect nobody, Rani, until we know," Game replied smiling.

"You had better suspect us all," said Janaki, with a little bitter laugh. "Except father," she added.

John looked at the end of his cigarette.

"I suppose you know," she went on, "that Mr. Naidu gave the other day half a lakh to the Gymnastic Society of Madras? It went through a bank in Hyderabad. I heard of it from there."

"He is a wealthy man," John replied, "and like

most politicians I suppose he likes to spend something on popularity."

"He has not to think of elections," said Janaki. "He is an appointed Member of Council— isn't he?"

"Yes, he is an appointed Member—a Government nomination."

"Well," said Janaki.

Her voice shook, and she began again.

"Well, they are going to buy rifles with the half-lakh. They are going to buy them from a small arms factory in Nagasaki. Perhaps Mr. Naidu does not know."

"Perhaps," said John.

"Perhaps they have told him," said Janaki, with timid, appealing eyes on Game's face, "that they will buy cricket bats with the money."

"Fifty thousand rupees worth of cricket bats," said Game, knocking his cigarette ash into his saucer.

"They are to come," continued Janaki, "in a shipment of iron drain-pipes addressed to the local authorities at Cochin, where—as perhaps you know—they are putting down a modern sewerage system, at the suggestion of the Resident."

"Really?" said Game. "This is very interesting, Rani."

He said it was very interesting, but his tone implied that it was not interesting at all, but unlikely, and, as far as it was possible, rather irritating. His tone was official, with the official touch of hostility to the undesirable.

"But I shouldn't worry about it, if I were you," he went on, responding to her silence. "It's amazing, the way such stories get about. The police are always feeding us with them."

"Yes?" said Janaki.

She could not resent what he said, he spoke so kindly, as if to a frightened child. Neither could she help seeing that her disclosure had failed to stir him in any way. She had won no gratitude for it, no impulse of acknowledgment which might bring him ever so little back to her. It was not enough, not convincing, not startling enough. Then she would give him more—all. She staked it with a shaking voice.

“Your police—”

“Our police,” he corrected her, smiling.

“The police learn a great deal, but they know nothing about Ganendra Thakore’s *asram* in Nagtollah, where are being taught—the practices of revolution.”

“Your information is partly right and partly wrong, I think. Ganendra has an *asram*, but it is in Harrison Road. We systematised all those irregular places of instruction, you know, some two years ago, and established three Sanscrit scholarships, with a view to stimulating a healthy spirit of competition among them. They now receive a Government grant, based on results, and are inspected twice a year. No doubt Ganendra uses his school for all the harm he can ; but I imagine it is rather the principles than the practices of revolution that he manages to teach there—the first principles.”

Janaki lifted her face and looked at Game. It was an arresting look, full of unspoken things ; and it did waken in his eyes an answering ray of inquiry. But at that moment the door opened and Sir Kristodas came in. With him entered a bare-headed ascetic in a yellow robe. He had a fair smooth face like a woman’s ; he might have been any age ; and as they approached he kept his head bent, looking at the floor.

Janaki, at sight of him, gave a little impetuous cry.

"Oh, Swami-ji!" she exclaimed, and hurried toward him. In another instant she was prostrate at his feet, touching them with her forehead. Game watched curiously; this to him was a new Rani. To her father it was the old one, miraculously returned; he smiled and looked happy. The priest raised her with fatherly pats and touches, and the three, with little excited laughs, spoke together rapidly in Bengali. Janaki moved beside the others, a humble zenana figure, in shrinking attitudes, with a transfigured face.

"It's a throw-back," said John to himself, with astonishment. "It's—"

"This is the Swami Yadava," said Sir Kristodas. "He is the religious adviser of my family; but he has been absent for some years in England and America. We are rejoiced to see him back."

The Swami gave Game a smile of singular beauty and a nerveless hand.

"I am happy to make your acquaintance," he said.

The Home Secretary to the Government of India just perceptibly opened his eyes; but he shook the hand cordially and they all sat down together. The priest, with crossed hands and bent head, said nothing. He looked with the very spirit of humility, with the smile of reunion still lingering round his lips.

"And what did you think of America, Swami-ji?" asked Game.

It was curious how the others grouped themselves round the Englishman. They had all the bonds, all the secrets, but he was the centre.

"There is not time enough there," said the priest; "but it is an interesting country, especially California, where they look constantly for God in every direction.

I made many disciples in California. One has returned with me here."

"A youth?" asked Sir Kristodas.

"A woman. A woman of sixty," smiled the Swami. "She seeks always, and she hopes to see here one of the Masters. I think she will never see any, but she does no harm."

"A woman of sixty," said John. "Curious. Is she wealthy?" he asked irresistibly.

The Swami turned unconcerned eyes upon him. "I do not know," he said; and added with polite afterthought, "But I could ask."

Sir Kristodas and Janaki watched their teacher with mute worship. The tension had vanished out of Janaki's face and the fussy importance out of the Judge's bearing. Something simple, sincere, and infinitely desirous possessed them. It was as if the flame in them had grown suddenly straight and steady, drawn toward the priest. For the first time Game saw beauty in Janaki's face, and something in her father's that had not been created by court or codes. He gathered that Yadava would at once make his home under the Judge's roof.

"We will hardly let him out of our sight," explained Janaki happily.

"When this girl of mine was quite young," said Sir Kristodas, "she had a bad illness, a very serious form of hysteria. She would grow rigid, and suffer terribly in the attacks, which would come on every three or four days. I tried every doctor in Calcutta. I sent her to the hills, to the sea. It was of no use. Then the Swami-ji returning here from a pilgrimage cured her in a week, without any medicine, without any diet, without any change!"

"I remember," said Janaki shyly. "Swami-ji said,

‘You will be a little better on Monday,’ and I was a little better. He said, ‘You will be afraid on Friday but only a little ill,’ and it was so. Then he said, ‘On Monday you will be well,’ and I was well.”

“You made her cure herself,” commented Game smiling.

“There were a few *mantras* also,” said the priest.

“You have been to America, Swami-ji,” John remarked. “Do you still say *mantras*?”

“More than ever. And I have returned,” said the priest.

“And our friends here,” pursued Game. “You will find that they too, in a sense, have been to America. Have you not?” he asked them.

Sir Kristodas smiled nervously, and his eye travelled to the bookshelf, where the *shalgram* sat in the dust between Spencer and Spinoza.

“They also will return,” said the Swami, and looked affectionately from one to the other.

They were all tranquillised by the man, and they sat there with him in a circle that shared for the moment some little taste of the Nirvana of forgetting. But a servant trespassed into it, and brought two of them, at least, sharply back to a world of travail and disorder.

“A miss-sahib comes,” he said, and ushered in Joan Mills.

She broke the spell, made it for John Game trivial as a cobweb, destroyed it for Janaki as if she had set a match to it. The ascetic glanced indifferently at her as she entered, but his look at Game was longer, and travelled from him to Janaki with a kind of detached concern, as if from afar off he saw something that he deplored. Sir Kristodas hurried forward to greet Miss Mills. He had never felt cordially toward her, but as

another English friend for Janaki he approved of her visits to his house. In the opinion of Sir Kristodas, Janaki could not have too many English friends.

Janaki herself had risen, and stood behind the tea-table stretching a mechanical hand across it. Her face had clouded, and the smile upon it was a mere displacement of her lips. John pulled up a chair. They were all on their feet but the priest. He, folding his arms in his yellow robe, seemed to trace the pattern of the carpet. He nodded in response to Joan's reverent bow, rested his chin in his palm and abstracted himself from the conversation.

"I am lucky to find you," began Joan.

"But one always finds the Rani on a Sunday afternoon," put in Game. "Didn't you know?"

"She has forgotten," said Janaki quickly.

"No—I didn't know. But how nice to know!"

Joan turned affectionately to her friend.

"I dashed in to say how very sorry I am that I can't, after all, lunch to-morrow. Father wants me. He is preparing—" She glanced at Game and stopped. "He will be dictating to me practically all day. May I come another time?"

"Yes," said Janaki. "Please come another time. I am generally in at lunch, and alone."

"My daughter is always glad to see the ladies of her acquaintance," said Sir Kristodas. "But we have offered you no tea. Have you some there, my child?"

Game, too, stood waiting for the cup.

"I am afraid it is cold," Janaki told them.

She spoke with averted eyes. A cloud of grief and anger had descended upon her, hung almost visibly about her. She sank into her chair under it pitifully without disguise.

"Then let them bring some more. They will do so in a moment," said the Judge peevishly.

"Please not for me," Joan protested rising. "I must get back to the hotel, where father is struggling all alone with a deputation of under-graduates."

She looked about brightly to collect an answering smile, but the sign was nowhere displayed. John Game, however, immediately got up.

"If you are going that way, will you drop me at the club?" he asked.

Joan said she would, with pleasure, and hesitated, looking at Janaki.

"But I am breaking up your party," she said.

"No," the Rani replied with a flash. "You are not. The Swami-ji has come to stay."

"Good-bye, then," nodded Joan; and John Game, with a puzzled glance, held out his hand to Janaki. Her words had been aimed at him, and had struck him, lightly, because of his preoccupation; but they had struck him. Her air doubled their meaning. She stood looking passionately at the priest.

"I'll say good-bye too, Rani," Game said gently.

"Oh, good-bye," she replied, and gave him her hand without her eyes.

"And I shall depend upon you to let me know if you hear any more about those drain-pipes," he said encouragingly.

"No," she answered. "No. I will put it out of my mind as you advise. No doubt it is only another foolish story. Good-bye."

Sir Kristodas saw his guests to the door, where Joan's victoria had made room under the wide porch for a third-class wooden conveyance from the station, on the roof of which was a small brown steel box and a bundle.

"It is the Swami's luggage," explained the Judge; and Game, as he and Miss Mills walked round it to gain her carriage, said to his companion, "They travel light, don't they, these Jogi fellows?"

But upstairs in the library of Kristodas Mukerji, surrounded by all the works of philosophy, modern and mediæval, which he had gathered together, the Rani Janaki lay upon the floor and wept, clasping the feet of the Brahmin Yadava, who looked pityingly down upon his spiritual daughter.

"Oh, Swami-ji," she sobbed in her pain, "cure me again."

CHAPTER XVI

NEXT morning the Swami Yadava, with his hands behind his back, walked about Sir Kristodas Mukerji's library examining the pictures on the walls. He was standing before a photogravure of Leighton's "Wedded," when the Judge, rubbing his chilled fingers, came hurrying into the room. With his obeisance, Sir Kristodas made apology for his lateness.

"There was a thick fog for a mile on this side of the ghat," he explained, "and that delayed me."

"You have been to bathe?" asked the Swami.

"Yes," said Sir Kristo. "Yes. But I went in my new electric brougham. I am too rheumatic nowadays to go on foot."

A ray of pleasure shot into the eyes of the ascetic.

"That is no matter," he said. "Changes in the manner—what are they? They are imposed—they disappear. Here too"—he indicated the walls of the room—"you have made changes. In the old days you had some very fine reproductions of the divinities. I remember a Saraswati, with her diadem picked out in gilt and pearls—and a Shiva-ji on his bull with the head and hands of the God in pure gold—"

"I have them still," the Judge assured him. "They are merely put aside for repairing. These are the choice of Janaki. But I shall have the old friends back soon."

"Please, no, babba," said Janaki, joining them. "They are very foolish, and inartistic, and out of drawing, those pictures. If we want subjects from the mythology let us buy them at the School of Art Exhibition, where they are treated with poetry and insight."

It was another Janaki this morning. The storm had passed, leaving heavier circles round her eyes, but within them only a gleam to say it was still in her heart. The night before the priest had told them much about his life in western worlds, and through their long talk Janaki gradually became re-possessioned of herself. It was rather a foreign self that came back to her, but it would have been recognised by Mrs. Sidney Grey.

"And where the artist is superior to his subject," remarked the Swami.

Janaki's tone had brought the slightest contraction over his face, like a ripple on a pool, which was instantly serene again.

"So they lay the gods under contribution at the School of Art. Well, I hope they do not draw them with wings, like the Christian angels!"

"Oh no, Swami-ji!" laughed Janaki. "Only their proper atmosphere."

"I think I like better the old crudity and stupidity, and reverence," said Yadava. "But this," he added courteously, pausing before Watts's "Happy Warrior" with the face of the lady of his dreams bending to reward him, "is very imaginative, and very popular in England—I saw it in many shop-windows there. In England one learns how closely poetry belongs to the senses, all the while claiming the soul, which resides far away in pure intelligence. As we Hindus know," he added. "At least we do not deceive ourselves about those matters."

Janaki was silent, but Sir Kristodas eagerly agreed.

"I suppose you found no spiritual intelligence whatever in England," he said ; and they went in to breakfast, the priest preceding, talking about the soul as zestfully as their neighbours and governors talked at that moment about the share market. The chairs were set and the table spread in English fashion, but Yadava blessed the food in the Bengali way.

"This for the gods," he said, setting aside a spoonful of rice. Then taking a piece of toast from the rack he broke it and gave a piece to each of the others. So they embarked upon their meal.

There was much talk of relatives. The priest gave new life to the family bond ; his cordial inquiries for one and another warmed the dormant interest in one and another's affairs. His questions were as shrewd and worldly as any archdeacon's, though his cloth was of a different colour—the price of a cousin bridegroom to a father-in-law of a lower caste, the division of an inheritance, the trouble that awaited a newly-fledged barrister returning to an orthodox family from the Temple Inn. With the barrister they stepped into English.

"I confess I have helped him to eat his dinners in England," said Sir Kristodas, "but I am not prepared to go to any expense to mend his caste. He must stand on his own feet now."

"You are perfectly right," said Yadava. "The sooner these old prejudices are broken up the better."

He, being a saint, stood above them.

"But what is this I hear about Barendra?" he went on. "Surely it is an exaggeration. That he throws up his career?"

"His career at the expense of the Government,

Swami-ji," said Janaki. "He will perhaps find another."

"He is a very foolish youth," remarked her father, shaking his head. "He comes back to beggary. Unless he embraces the religious life I see nothing for him."

"He wins a four years' English scholarship from Government, profits by it for three years, then suddenly refuses further aid, pays back the three years' stipend already enjoyed, and returns defiant!" exclaimed Yadava. "It is incredible. And the money with which to pay back—where was it found!"

"It was found," said Janaki significantly. "Barendra is very clever," she added, "and there are those who appreciate cleverness as well as the Government."

The priest seemed not to perceive the bias of what she said.

"It is dropping the substance for the shadow," he replied with an air of detachment; but his eyes were alert, and though his tone invited no comment, it was plain that he waited for it. "We must marry Barendra."

"I heartily agree with you," said Sir Kristodas.

He could do nothing heartily; even his breakfast he took with scrutiny and as a duty, but it was plain that he did agree with the ascetic.

Janaki said nothing, but sent for a specially prepared vegetable dish.

"I remembered, Swami-ji," she said as the man brought it.

"Ah, that was kind. But you have a clever cook if he can make it as well as you did in the old days."

"I did not trust him. I made it myself!" Janaki

told him ; and the priest took a portion of the dish with a smile of double satisfaction.

"More cinnamon?" she asked.

"No, it is perfect. Well, well. And are there many who think these nationalist dreams will come true?"

"There is a rabble of auto-hypnotised persons," the Judge replied solemnly.

"Father does not know! He sits in Court all day, and hears of nothing but codes and precedents. But things are going to happen in India beyond the codes and without precedent."

"I don't know where she gets her ideas," said Sir Kristodas fretfully.

"I hear of an active press," Yadava said.

"It is altogether tainted. But no really seditious newspaper comes into this house," the Judge told him. "I see to that."

And indeed he did look carefully and often at everything that entered by the front door.

"Father is very particular about what he subscribes to," remarked Janaki, without adding that her ayah was not. "But, Swami-ji, are you not then in sympathy with the national movement?"

It was Janaki, with the impatience and the freedom she had gathered from the West, that could venture this. Her father would have approached the matter with infinite precautions and indirections if he approached it at all. Why demand net political views of one's religious adviser? The Swami inhabited a super-political world. Did not his daughter understand that? He looked at her with another pucker of irritation. But Janaki's eyes were fixed upon the priest. There was a moment of silence while she waited for his reply.

"If you will excuse old ways," said Yadava, "I will eat this *pillau* with my fingers. I cannot say I much like these foolish forks."

"We will all eat it with our fingers," said Janaki, a little cast down.

Sir Kristodas looked relieved and triumphant. The girl might have known! But it was too soon. They were to have a pronouncement—Janaki especially was to have a pronouncement—when the Swami had eaten a little of the *pillau* with his fingers.

"When the fruit is ripe," he said, watching them both, "it drops to the ground. The British in India are ripe. Perhaps the climate," he added with a smile, "has forced them a little. But violence is folly—violence is folly."

The Judge shook his head affirmatively, and Janaki lowered her eyes with an air of humility. The priest looked gravely at her.

"God has the emancipation of India in His hand," he said, "but it cannot be taken from Him by force, or by fraud, or in any evil way."

"What excellent words!" murmured Sir Kristodas in Bengali; but Janaki kept her retreat into silence.

"The emancipation, we call it. Perhaps the Supreme calls it the punishment," went on the priest nimbly. "He holds it in His hand, and turns it, and looks at it both ways. And perhaps He laughs."

Father and daughter waited, with submission. Yadava's glance, free as a bird's, fell on a ray of sunlight that came through the shuttered window, and he smiled at it as if it spoke to him and brought him another thought.

"God is the old friend of India. The English are

friends of two hundred years, but God came with the dawn. The English by their administration have given her justice, railways, political ideas. God, by my ancestors, gave her a soul. The English will leave their gifts and go, but the God of India and the soul of India"—he paused—"will remain with her. We have that for our comfort," he said.

At that Janaki lifted her eyes, and the priest took from them a look of pain and longing.

"Is it not so, little sister?" he asked; but she dropped them mutely again.

"It is Veda," her father answered for her.

"I am tired of the English," said Janaki bitterly.

"So am I—so am I," said the priest briskly. "With their efficiency and their economy, and all their right angles. We ask them for bread and they give us a stone. They are not our ideals, those things."

"But we could not do without them," remarked Sir Kristodas, and added simply, "What is 'bread,' Maharaj?"

"It depends upon the eater," replied the priest.

"Wholly upon that, Kristodas. No—we could not do without them. But of course we could do without more of them. More and more of them." His words seemed to feel their way.

"That they should evacuate office in our favour," said the Judge, "that I do not ask. But more friendly and sympathetic relations, that is what we want."

"No," said Janaki.

The priest smiled.

"It is my hope," he said. "Fewer tutors we want, and more friends. But it is my grief that they as a people seem to have little affection for us as a people."

For some of us, yes—for our peasants and our princes. Pertab Singh for one. I have seen them speak with tears in their eyes of that man Pertab. God knows why, unless because he is brave and good-looking. But men like themselves—no. You would embrace them—they nod uncomfortably and move away. For myself I would rather be worse governed and better loved. Nor do they know our saints. They do not know," he smiled, "what a saint is."

"Then they miss the only knowledge," said Kristodas.

"The only knowledge," repeated Yadava. "But presently, presently—let us have patience—they will grant us our desire, the good English, and leave to us our country. They will take some taxes, which we can very well spare, to pay an army to protect us from ourselves and the Pathans; the Viceroy will become a magnified Resident, very polite about the tariff, and the white rulers, as a caste, will disappear. All this I fear."

"You *fear*, Maharaj?" exclaimed Janaki.

"Where have you found this opinion?" asked Sir Kristodas.

He turned first to the girl.

"I greatly, greatly fear," he told her, and then he answered her father.

"In England, Kristodas. They are strangely changing, the English. An age of luxurious doubt is upon them—it has come with their great prosperity. They indulge their souls as well as their bodies. They ask questions, questions of themselves. 'Ought we?' they say. They have lost faith in their own motives; they rend the garment of their hypocrisy. They vacillate and listen, and give way. We from beneath the altar"—he looked compassionately a

Janaki—"ask our Lord 'How long?' We are so impatient and so angry. But it will not be long."

"Considered as imaginative writing," commented Sir Kristodas, "theirs is perhaps the best Bible in the world—should you not say so?"

"A beautiful book, too much neglected by us," said Yadava. "No, we have only to leave them to their voices. It will not be long," he repeated. "Let those take pleasure in the thought who can."

"I do not take pleasure in it," said Kristodas; but Janaki made no sign.

Yadava looked vividly about him, and leaned forward, his arms wrapped in his yellow cloth, forgetting his food.

"*Sono*," * he said softly, "*Sono*," and again with even more gentleness, "*Sono*—let us open a little window in our soul. England is the husband of India. We talk of the Mother as if we had but one parent." He smiled whimsically. "But we are the children of England also. Can we deny it?"

Sitting at their English breakfast-table they consulted their English consciences and found no English words with which to deny it. A spark of appreciation showed in the eye of Kristodas. Janaki's grew dreamy.

"The husband of India," she murmured.

"There are those," said Yadava, looking straight in front of him, "who would make their mother a widow. I am not of them. But God may bring this curse upon her, as it has pleased Him to bring it upon others. It is my fear."

"Let us hope not," said Sir Kristodas piously.

"Aye. Let us hope," returned the priest. "But

* "Listen."

there is also fear. Listen. It was an aristocratic England that took India, a free, fighting, kingly England, of one mind, of one law, master in his own house. Who calls the English the white Brahmins? A foolish name. They are the white Kshattriyas—or they were—and under them the Brahmins could sit and rule and tell their tale of God. As ever. What are the English but a caste, permitted by God to be the right hand of the Brahmins?"

He enunciated this without a trace of vain-glory, placing it before his fellow Brahmins as he might have placed the statement that two and two make four; and they accepted it without the movement of an eyelid.

"But from a democratised England what can we expect?" went on the priest scornfully. "Ideals of the pantry. A husband, I fear, grown indifferent. A proletariat throwing India, and the soul of India, under some mean axiom made to fit its grovelling necessities of the ballot. A strutting ignorance, a patronising callousness, masquerading as recognition and generosity!"

"I think they look to the interests of their capitalists to steady their hold upon India," said the Judge.

"Have the interests of their capitalists steadied their hold upon Africa?" asked the priest. "No, the interests of their capitalists will be another red rag to the forces that are so harmful to them. Do the interests of their capitalists out here give employment to a single British mill-hand? They will ask that. They will say to their capitalists, 'Bring your money home.' And all the while India will clamour and demand and beseech, and they will grow more and more irresolute, and one

day, while they are still comparing themselves with Augustus and contrasting their empire with his, they will awake to find"—he paused and sighed—"the historical parallel complete. And for us will emerge politics for peace, and the new spirit for the old obedience. First the hand against the king, then the hand against the priest—against God. As it has been in France, as it will be in Ireland. What can be the end of that, Kristodas?"

"I have always told you, Janaki, that those persons in Oxford were very shallow," said her father nervously.

"A democracy picking perpetual quarrel with its representatives in this country," continued Yadava, "whose superiority it suspects and hates. Already I find great weariness for this cause among the English here. The burden is very heavy, and their eyes are turned elsewhere. In the train yesterday were a couple of district officials. One of them said to the other, 'This is no white man's job. I mean to send my son to Canada.'"

Janaki flushed.

"Let him," she said rebelliously. "We can do without his son."

"Yes. Perhaps. But it may be more our concern than his son can do without us."

"More our concern," repeated Kristodas. "Certainly;" and he looked reprovably at his daughter.

"After all," went on the priest, "what is our dear country to the English? Now, then—what is it? It is the Pit. What is their great, their immensely creditable achievement? They have conquered, they have held, they have administered and developed the Pit. We have our own ways of returning this obligation. Cholera

and enteric and frontier bullets we offer freely, with a moderate scale of pension to the survivors. We have drained England of her best blood and her best brains at that price for a hundred years. I sometimes ask myself—if we had to offer the contract for our protection to the world, who else would do it so cheap? They are a people of strange ideas. They take it out in satisfaction. The Americans, for example, would ask more. Or the Japanese,” he mused. “Perhaps without knowing it, they are growing a little tired.”

“This is a gloomy anticipation,” remarked Sir Kristodas.

Yadava smiled.

“Let us not say ‘anticipation,’” he said. “Apprehension—it is no worse than that. And, of course, there are more apprehensions than one,” he added swiftly.

Janaki, who had long since finished her meal and sat with her hands in her lap, stopped twisting her bangles and looked up. Yadava did not return her glance, but he answered it.

“In mind,” he said, “we are more subtle than the English. They are fools to us. But in temperament they are more subtle than we. Their passions—their consciences—who can understand? Their veins run flame and ice. Herein lies great danger. For, know you not, these are days of provocation. And at any hour some folly may drop the match. We talk of that sleeping devil, race hatred, as if it were confined to one race only, and that our own; but our fathers knew better. And I wish,” he added, “they would keep their Socialists at home. They do harm in this country. They breed dreams and passion, and so hurry upon us that which might otherwise never come.”

“I am sure that is true,” said Sir Kristodas; “but

the daughter, I think, is harmless, and we do not see the father."

"Mischief is rising round the man like froth," replied Yadava. "His words are poison to our people, though he is but a fool. They are encouraged to madness, believing in the protection he cannot give them, nor his party, who are still, thank God, far from being dictators of English policy. He is a false and a pretentious sign, but he is too welcome to the wild visions of our people. Things are about to happen, if they are not prevented, that will bring terror and shame upon the Mother, Kristodas."

"Can they be prevented?" asked the Judge.

"It is what I have come back to see," the priest replied; and looked quietly at the Rani Janaki. She returned his regard with love and reverence, and her answer seemed drawn from her in spite of herself.

"I wonder if you have come in time?" she said.

CHAPTER XVII

MR. MILLS said jocularly to Jotindra Pal that like a doctor, he, Vulcan, had his hours for consultation. His patients were so numerous that he was obliged to receive them between two o'clock and four. They suffered from various ills, but Jotindra declared that Vulcan could cure them all.

"You are a divine healer to the body of this nation, sir," he explained; and indeed there was something like healing in the gratified eyes of many a visitor as he went down the stairs of the Grand Hotel, and out into the less sympathetic world of the Maidan. This although the Parliamentary attitude towards them changed imperceptibly from day to day. In the beginning he could scarcely see them for the gravity of their situation and the sorrow in his eyes. When this dropped away he began to treat them like constituents, with a hearty clap on their muslin-clad shoulders, and a "Well now, and what can I do for *you*?" And as time went on, bringing ever another grievance and a new petition, ever more garlands and further flatteries, I fear Mr. Mills' manner assumed a touch of the Anglo-Indian vice of patronage, and was occasionally not wholly free from impatience. But his handclasp was always warm, his assent always easy, his indignation always ready, and never [a Babu of them all went down the stairs with a rebuff in his ears and resentment at his heart.

Joan made a point of being present at most of these interviews, but on the occasion of Sirdar Bulwant Singh's visit—it was a day of festival—she had gone, reverent in spirit, to the shrine of the goddess Kali with the Roy ladies, who had an occasion for domestic worship there. Vulcan was alone with the English newspapers when Joseph showed the Sirdar up, the astrologers having called most of his usual visitors, with the Roy ladies, to sacrifice a goat, to throw a cocoanut into the river, or at least to bathe that day at Kalighat. Joseph brought the Sirdar in very respectfully; and the old soldier made a fine picture as he stood in the door saluting, his brushed-up beard as white as his turban, three medals on his cotton-clad breast, Subadar-Major Bulwant Singh, of Nicholson's Sikhs, retired. Vulcan looked at him with interest.

"Come in," he said. "Come in. I'm glad to see you. Take a chair."

"Sir, by your kindness I will sit," said the Subadar-Major, and sat, the compliment not being new. Many an English officer had paid it to him before.

"You are not a Bengali, I'm thinking," said Vulcan intelligently.

The old man politely checked the negative that rose to his lips, but his hand went to his divided beard and gave it a fresh twist towards one ear, and then towards the other.

"You are a stranger, sahib," he replied instead. "Then how can you know the different peoples of Hindustan? You cannot know them. You see only that all are black, I think."

The Subadar-Major's features were big and broad in his white beard, and had an expression of bonhomie and commonsense. He smiled compassionately as he spoke.

"No, my man—there you are wrong," retorted Vulcan. "It is the one thing I will not see, that one man is white and another black, or buff, or brown, or pea-green: or any other colour!"

"Pea-green," repeated Bulwant Singh puzzled. "But the skin of the people of Hindustan *have* the dark colour," he insisted.

"Perhaps so—perhaps so. You don't quite take my point. Well, and since you don't belong hereabouts which will your part of the country be—Madras way, maybe?"

The old soldier's eye twinkled.

"Sahib, my regiment never took a prize for making curries, and for that I am not much sorry. I am Sikh, and I am Jagirdar,* and my father was Jagirdar, and my grandfather was Jagirdar, in the district of Jullunder in the Punjab."

"Oh indeed! And what do they think in the Punjab of the new movement?"

"Sahib, I do not know. There is much settlement and giving of canal lands by the Sirkar lately in the Punjab. It is for that I have come to speak."

"And a very interesting matter, I don't doubt. But the first thing I invariably ask every Indian gentleman I meet is—'What is your opinion of the national movement?'" said Vulcan, and tapped the table with his pencil in the manner of one who must be answered.

At the word "national" a ray of understanding shot into the eyes of Bulwant Singh. He was silent for a moment; then he smiled broadly.

"Oh, sir, fear not. In Hindustan it is said, 'It takes twelve Bengalis to cut off a goat's ear,' and that is a true remark."

* Holder of land tax-free by Government grant for loyal services.

With which he slapped the inside of his thigh as if it still wore the breech of a native officer, and shook with a silent guffaw.

Vulcan got up and began to pace to and fro. It was his habit when the situation he was examining did not exactly unfold itself.

"I see I don't make myself plain," he said. "You are a Jagirdar, you say. Is that anything like a rajah? I ask because I have noticed that the nobility are rather lukewarm about the demands of the educated classes."

Bulwant Singh's face sobered.

"Jagirdar is quite different to Rajah," he said. "Jagirdar gets a little land by the gift of Government. Rajah gets much land by the gift of God, sahib."

"Oh," said Vulcan. "Well, you surprise me. I had been given to understand that the agitation was growing in those parts."

"There are fools in the Punjab also," said Bulwant Singh, "and as it has been in the past, so it will be again—Bengal will drink the whisky and the Punjab will pay for it. My people are very stupid, sahib. Therefore when Ganendra Babu, who will now very shortly be hanged, sent his evil talk in printed papers among the men of my *pultan*, I took it all from the hand of the postman to the hand of the Adjutant-Sahib, who burnt it, and said I had done well. For it is told in Hindustan that the breach in the bund can be mended with a needle in the beginning, but where the water has come through it cannot be crossed even on an elephant," he added shrewdly.

"So you are well content with things as they are," said Vulcan, with a slightly fallen countenance.

"No, sahib, I am not well content—altogether. I

do not speak about my land, though the tax was raised last year—it is good well-land, eighteen maunds to the acre. I do not complain. But my son is there, on the canal lands, in the Ghorab. He took the best of the stock and went there. For three years he has been writing to me, ‘Father, come and see. Father, there is great trouble here, and no one has any *aram* * after his labour. Come and see.’ He asks me so often at last I go. Just now I am coming from his place. I find all the tale true. Then, sahib, I am reading always in the Lahore native paper that you are in Calcutta to learn the wrong in Hindustan. So I say to my son, ‘I will go to Calcutta and tell that sahib the wrong in the Ghorab.’”

“Wait a minute,” said Vulcan, and consulted one of a small pile of note-books.

“‘Canals—Canal colonies—Punjab, 18,00,000 acres irrigated and opened up in 1902. Mostly allotted retired sepoy. (Enquire why differential treatment in favour army.) Administered by a Colonisation Officer (Henry Adams, I.C.S.) under Commissioner (James Batt, C.I.E., I.C.S.).’ Come now, Mr. Singh, you see I know all about it. And what complaint have you of this Mr. Adams, eh? Takes all you can drag out of the land in taxes, does he?”

Bulwant Singh looked exceedingly grave.

“Adams-sahib? Sir, there is no complaint of Adams-sahib.”

“He’s a subordinate, no doubt—not to blame. Gets his orders and has to carry them out,” said Vulcan understandingly. “It’s the Commissioner probably in this case that’s the responsible party—this chap Batt. Well, what has he been up to?”

* Peace.

The old soldier's hand went again to his beard and he fixed a disconcerted gaze on the floor.

"Without doubt there is a Commissioner-sahib," he said blankly, "but I do not know his name."

"Then," said Mr. Mills, closing his note-book, "I don't quite see what I can do for you, my man."

"Sir," said Bulwant Singh rapidly, "it is trouble made by zilladars and patwaris—men of Hindustan who take the rules of the Sirkar in their hands as whips. It is trouble made by the patwari Gurdit Singh, who is reporting good wheat crop on five killas of my son, and the five killas are bare as a boy's cheek, nor will Bhola Ram, zilladar, who gathers the tax, believe this word. So my son gets no remission of water rate for failure of crops."

"Why don't you get Bhola Ram to come and see?" asked Vulcan tolerantly.

"Sir, he asks too much. For less than ten rupees he will not come. Five my son will give, seven he will give, but ten who can give with nine mouths to feed and a coming-wallah?"

"My good Jagirdar," said Vulcan coldly, "you are using the language of corruption; and it seems clear that your son is willing to undermine the integrity of a public official."

But Bulwant Singh, full of his griefs and their remedy, did not even try to understand.

"Sir," he hurried on, "Gov'tment just now are taking from my son four rupees eight annas *abiana*—water rate. All men living on canal lands are paying four rupees water rate for wheat lands. From one it is a little, and from another it is a little, but from all it is much. Sir, they are poor men, but they think it is not justice that they pay so much, and the Sirkar sends

only one sahib to do justice in the canal lands. Sir, in the Ghorab are eight hunder thousan' men—and one sahib. I do not count the canal sahibs who have become as bunniahs, and love only money."

"But what, my good fellow, do you think I can do about that?"

The Sikh joined his big hands together.

"Sahib, *mera urz sono*.* When you are going back to England please to say in durbar, 'The men of the canal lands in the Ghorab are much tormented by zilladars and patwaris; and they ask for three or four more sahibs to be sent for the affairs of the canal lands in the Ghorab. And you can please make mention of the four-eight water cess.'"

Vulcan snapped the elastic round his note-book and threw it on the table.

"I'm to say that in durbar, am I?" he said quizzically. "In that wonderful durbar that we hold in Westminster. To His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, I suppose?"

The old man rose to his feet, saluted, and sat down again.

"King Edward Seven," he repeated, and looked doubtingly at Mills. "It would be very well, sahib."

"I'm afraid," Vulcan told him, "we don't do business just in that way in England, Major Singh. More than that, I am pretty strongly of opinion that you've got too many sahibs already in this country. You're taking a wrong line about your zilladars and patwaris. Don't abuse them—educate them. Make the best of them. Set a standard before them. And since you seem fond of proverbs I'll give you an English one, 'It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.' Just think of that

* Hear my petition.

sometimes, when you get back to the Ghorab. And now, as I see there's another gentleman waiting to see me, I'll bid you good morning."

The Swami had followed his visiting-card, which Mr. Mills scrutinised as he spoke of the ill bird that fouled its own nest. Standing in the door he heard the whole of Vulcan's words of dismissal to Bulwant Singh, who turned instantly to go.

The Sikh salaamed deeply to the priest, and as they passed in the door Yadava spoke to him rapidly in Urdu.

"God be with you," he said. "There be many sahibs ; this is a mad one. Trouble no further."

Then he made the Socialist Leader so low and so long an obeisance that Mills dropped his outstretched hand.

"Take a chair," said Vulcan. "You speak English? —*Angrezi bat bolta?* If not, I'm afraid we shall have some trouble to understand one another. I've only just begun your language."

"I speak English," said Yadava, "and I hope to understand you," he added humbly.

"Well, Swami Yadava, I've heard about you from my daughter, and I'm very much interested to meet you. You did quite right to come and see me. You gentlemen of the yellow robe are a great power in this country, I understand."

"We have some little influence," said Yadava. "The heart of India is religious. Her very life is Vedanta."

"I'm not myself a religious man," said Mills with a seriousness that was very religious, "but in my friend Ganendra Thakore I see what a force it can be in public affairs. Do you know Ganendra?"

"Yes, I know the poor man. He believes himself to be purely inspired, but he is ruled entirely by anger," said the Swami. "It is a pity. He has a good brain."

"He's got fair cause for his anger."

The Swami smiled.

" 'I and my children if the gods neglect
That has its reason too,' "

he quoted. "Do not be led, sir, by Ganendra's anger."

"Oh, I consider everything, and weigh everything," Mills told him. "Thakore is a valuable national force. The lump must have its leaven, you know—the lump must have its leaven. Well, though not, as I say, inclined that way myself, it's plain to me that at the present juncture of affairs in the country you priests have a wonderful opportunity."

"The priests of this country have always had a wonderful opportunity," Yadava told him, "and they have always taken it. For this reason the heart of India is quivering to-day in the hand of God, and not lying like a stone at His feet."

"I suppose that is a very natural way for you to put it. I should say that her head was beginning to respond to political ideas. And it's marvellous, sir, how they take root and expand among your people. Even in the course of my short sojourn among them I have marked the growth of such conceptions, though perhaps, as you say, behind the idea of India for the Indians is the idea of India for the old gods," said Vulcan benevolently. "You have plenty of them. I understand there are over a hundred thousand in the Hindu pantheon."

He looked searchingly at his visitor, from whom, any more than from Bulwant Singh, he had not yet received

the morsel of endorsement and applause upon which he daily fed.

The priest stirred a little in his chair.

"That would take too long to explain," he said, "and no doubt you know all about it already. But the old gods have taken very good care of India. They have brought her the British. And together," he added with a smile, "they make a very good Government, the old gods and the British."

Vulcan drew closer, put his elbows on the table and buried his bushy chin in his hands. The Swami's words were so gentle, his manner so silken, that the traveller from Westminster felt himself invited to a primrose path of argument.

"I don't deny we've done something for the country," he said; "but the best thing we can do for it is to wake in its people the desire for political responsibility. Don't you agree to that?"

Yadava's thin brown hand caressed his cheek.

"Is it not one of your poets who says—

"‘There is on earth a yet diviner thing—

Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King’?"

he quoted again; and at that Vulcan's fist came down on the table.

"There's nothing diviner, sir," he said, "than representative institutions."

"Oh, they are the bulwarks of Western liberty," responded the priest suavely; "but we in India have another kind of freedom."

Mills gave him a glance of half contemptuous pity.

"There is no other kind," he said. "And you in India must rouse yourselves to feel that. It is what I preach to my friends here day and night."

A ray of anticipation shot through the eyes of the Swami Yadava ; but he proceeded very warily.

"It is a lofty doctrine. And your motives, sir, are of the noblest. You come to do us good—we thank you. But to urge us to take these refined institutions by storm when we have not even a vote, even a rifle—when we have nothing but our poor hands—is there no danger in this? Have you not a fable about new wine in old bottles?"

Vulcan's reply was sententious.

"Let the bottles burst," he said. "The people will drink the new wine, and it will hearten them for great deeds. Mind you, I speak of constitutional agitation. That is what I expect—monster meetings, monster petitions, influential delegations and boycott—boycott—boycott—the greatest political weapon of modern times. Boycott the Manchester cotton-spinner, boycott the Sheffield cutler, boycott the Birmingham maker of false gods! Take it from me—boycott will see you through. Constitutional agitation—that is what the people are bent upon. There is no sedition in this country."

"I am glad to hear that," said Yadava softly, with his eyes on the floor.

"None whatever. But there is a great and growing passion of resistance to unnatural measures imported by an alien Government to check the political development of the Indian race."

"Which Indian race?" asked Yadava ; but Mills, once more on his feet and furiously pacing, with his hands deep in his trouser-pockets, paid no heed.

"Such a measure as this infamous Suppression of Free Speech Act, the infringement of which has placed the noblest Roman of you all in peril of his life and in

certainly of transportation—to herd with the lowest of criminals for the rest of his days.”

“Ah, that poor man Ganendra,” murmured Yadava. “But, sir, believe me, it is not necessary to defy the law. The law may close the mouths of public orators, but the voice of the awakened spirit of our Mother cannot be silenced. It will speak in the leaves of the trees—the wind will carry it to the hearts of our rulers—”

Vulcan faced round upon him.

“Excuse me, Swami Yadava. You are a priest, and there never was a priest yet who did not find that sacerdotal domination was easier in political coma. But I tell you that it *is* necessary to defy such a law as this. More than that, I’m prepared to back my opinion. They intend to send Ganendra Thakore to a convict’s grave for addressing a public meeting in contravention of their Act. Well, the day they pass that sentence on him I propose myself to address a public meeting—a meeting to express sorrow and sympathy and indignation and protest—in contravention of their Act. And we shall see what they will do with me!”

Vulcan spoke with rapid anger. His face was pale, and he caught at his beard with a hand that trembled. He could seldom mention Ganendra without emotion; and he had this afternoon experienced the first sign of opposition from a people that had to him also become a subject race, subject to his theories, his prejudices, and his personal power. He did not take it well. I fear he would have made an autocratic Deputy Secretary, or a Collector who would have oppressed the people sadly for their good. But the Swami Yavada stood with great meekness before him.

“Ah, sir,” he said, “priest though I am, please

believe me that my eyes are fully open to the glory of our national ideals. But priests are perhaps prone to fears and anxieties which do not trouble men of the world, and I am afraid I have wearied you in speaking thereof. I must thank you for having very much reassured me."

"I am glad of that," said Vulcan, looking at his watch.

"And if I may now take leave," said Yadava, "I should like heartily to applaud the courageous intention on your part of which you have just told me."

"Ah, well," replied Vulcan, "the less said about that for the present the better, perhaps."

"No doubt," said Yadava smiling, "silence about lofty aims is always best."

Then Vulcan closed the door upon him and re-lighted his pipe. The Swami went out into Chowringhee, and presently drew his bare legs after him into a third-class hired carriage. The driver, with many shouts and threatenings, made his way among the ox-carts and trams and dog-carts and motors that thronged the squalid sunlit mouth of Dhurumtolloh, and dived successfully into that thoroughfare. Some distance down he turned into a side street bearing the name of a Hindu divinity, and deposited the Swami Yadava at the door of Ram Chander Mullick, Sub-Inspector of Police.

CHAPTER XVIII

“I WILL take you,” said Bepin Behari Dey to Joan Mills, “to see a real *asram*.”

“And father?” she asked.

“I think not at present,” Bepin told her after an instant of hesitation. “He is not quite ripe for it, I think. He believes there is no sedition and——”

“And there is,” said Joan steadily. “Of course there is. How could it be otherwise?”

Bepin gave her a look of reverence.

“You are, I truly believe, the more advanced of the two,” said he.

He had received Ganendra’s message, and in some ways he was bolder, in others more timid. The message, conveyed by the prisoner’s solicitors, was naturally not quite explicit ; but Bepin had the aptitude of his race for concealed meanings, and easily distangled its news, its sentiment, and its instructions. He was to use every effort to interest Miss Mills in the national movement ; he was to draw her deeper, further in, to claim her and identify her. That was to be done first and done well. Having secured her for the Mother, Bepin might then think of himself. And to be fair to the young Bengali, it was in that sequence that he did think of Joan. His desire was ardent, but it was not the flame that consumed him.

She was a covetable possession with an honoured place in the zenana ; she was greatly to be longed for ;

but she did not enter and colour the whole of his life. He made her resolutely second. John Game, struggling to adjust her to an official career, might have envied him.

So, most timid about what he had most at heart, he invited her tremblingly to wider and fuller unveilings of the revolutionary idea, while he showed her his personal devotion in ways that were plain and unhesitating. He made no more attempt to conceal his new emotion than he would have made to conceal his religion. Such things were elemental, natural, necessary ; there was no shame in them except the natural shame of the blood that confessed itself in lip and eye. He was strictly following his instructions, and had said nothing yet directly of his personal hopes ; but a day had come when Joan, watching his progress along the lines of the education she had conceived for him—his better acquaintance with Western ideals of womanhood—saw quite clearly at what point he had arrived. It was the same old point ; often she had been confronted by it before in the course of friendships otherwise serene ; but I think I may say that she had never recognised it with less irritation and dismay. On the contrary, she thought about it sadly and poetically. It was in its way consummate and beautiful that her Oriental experience should burn into this esoteric jewel of an Oriental passion, so mysteriously different from any other. It made no demand upon her—probably would never make any—and as it waxed before her eyes she dwelt upon it with a charmed smile. John Game, on the contrary, she had begun to suspect with some indignation.

Bepin conducted her by tram to Nagtollah ; and Joan smiled as they took their seats among the Babus,

thinking of what Lucy Foley would say to see her. They were all about her, the Babus, whose ladies did not travel by electric tram, fat Babus and lean, old and young, clad for the most part in loin-sheets and collarless white shirts, naïvely worn exposed to the very hem. Their brawny brown calves were bare to their socks and shoes, and they wore nothing on their heads but their own glistening black locks, which often fell ambrosially over their foreheads. Some of them were spectacled and read the newspapers. They looked with intelligence and curiosity out of their lustrous eyes at Bepin and his companion; one or two of them whispered to the others, and they made respectful room. Joan considered them with great kindness, and reflected that if, as a travelling public, they were not so fond of attar-of-rose she would like always to use the electric tram. She had begun to feel that life might contain too much attar-of-rose.

The tram soon took them far from any likelihood of encountering Mrs. Foley or her criticism. The Babus were going home, but for Joan it was a series of new suburbs that led to Nagtollah, and she was still invincibly pleased with what she saw.

"I like this," she said to Bepin, "it's so Indian."

Calcutta, with its palaces, its statues of administrative Englishmen, and its Army and Navy Stores, she often found difficult to admire; it was not Indian enough. But here, on either side of the clanging tram, were the habitations of the people, mud-walled, low-tiled, or heavy with a tipsy load of rotting thatch. Gourds grew over some of them, broad-leaved, luxurious; here and there a goat stood in a door. Before them squatted a line of inhabitants—old women with pendulous breasts scouring brass vessels, naked children playing with

faded marigolds, thrusting out their little stomachs and screaming like parroquets at the tram.

Small squalid shops were strung like beads on the string of the street, shops yellow with gram, brown with fried cakes, or red with butchers' meat. Here and there a more pretentious plaster dwelling drew behind a festering pool and a pipal tree, with closed shutters. Some of these were grey with dilapidation and some were painted blue. The tram clanged perpetually, clanged to warn an ox-cart, a washerman's donkey, or a chicken off the track ; and the air, blowing in from all sides, brought a wide choice of odours. Strong among them was that of frying oil mingled with the smoke of the evening fire rising through multitudinous roofs. It had an acrid, primitive suggestion of comfort. It spoke of shelter and the day's work done ; it made its sharp appeal to the heart. Joan drew it in with pleasure and said to Bepin—

"I believe I love the very smell of India."

He only looked at her in reply ; but the gratitude in his glance was simple and adoring. Joan turned hers upon the hurrying landscape, but now and then it stole back to consider the young Bengali whom she had made her friend. As usual he was in his neat European dress, with only the small twisted cap of white and gold for a touch of difference. He sat with his arms folded and his legs crossed, as far from her as he could upon the wooden seat—there was something in the attitude that pleased her. She noticed the nervous delicacy of his hand and foot.

"They are *very* like us," she was saying to herself, when Bepin stopped the tram.

They had the little distance that we know to walk ; and there came a point at which Bepin hesitated.

"I am wondering which way to take you in," he told her. "There are three."

Joan looked about her. She saw only a potter's shop and a pariah dog, and over a discoloured wall in the distance some trees waving.

"Why not the nearest?" she asked.

"There are three ways," repeated Bepin. "One is known only to myself and three or four others, very secret; one is for those who are pledged to the cause, and the other is the way for the public—and for the enemy."

He looked at her doubtfully, but she did not hesitate an instant.

"Take me by the way of those who are pledged to the cause," she said; and Bepin, laughing delightedly, led her round the corner and through the shop of Jaffer the Cabuli.

In the garden the afternoon shadows were stretching far over the wide spaces, though the south wind of February had swept away the cold weather, and already the days were longer. The air was exquisitely soft, and a group of tamarinds in the grassy distance stood cloudily against the west. The dipping sun flashed on the fronds of the palms, and spread a sheet of gold on the tank. A gaunt cotton-tree had burst into its leafless crimson cups; and, somewhere hidden, a copper-smith chanted his endless "*Tonk! Tonk!*" to say that the winter was done. Joan looked about her with delight.

"What a delicious spot!" she exclaimed. "How peaceful! How — *religious!* And it is here that Ganendra inspired you all!"

Bepin turned a very thoughtful face upon her. "It is here," he said.

Miss Mills looked towards the house.

"Are any classes going on now?" she asked. "Could I hear a lecture? I should not understand, of course, but—"

"It is not the hour," Bepin told her. "The students are dispersed at this time. Besides, I am afraid you could not very well be introduced. An English lady—"

"Ah yes—I understand," said Joan with ready acquiescence. "They would be afraid I might take offence. And I would have no way of telling them that I was a friend."

Bepin was silent. They were pacing up and down between the tank and the tamarinds.

"Do the students get any general education here?" asked Joan.

"No," said Bepin. "They learn only to serve their country."

She took the significance from his tone, and her face grew serious. It seemed that a good deal might be implied, a good deal of the heroic, of the consecrated, of all that she held most lofty; and that possibly something in herself which she ought to deny, some prejudice in favour of her own race and its empire, might conflict with it. If her inward glance showed her any such prejudice, she took a high hand with it. Turning toward Bepin with rather a consciously noble air, she said—

"You know how I feel toward such aspirations."

"Do I know?" asked Bepin.

"I have often told you. May I see the classrooms?" she asked.

"They are not interesting," he assured her. "Just rooms—a few chairs and tables. But—yes—if you

like ;" and they walked toward the house. It looked almost deserted, but as they reached the steps under the porch the door opened and a young Bengali, in a black alpacca coat, came out and down. He wore spectacles, and had thick curly hair.

"Why, it's Mr. Roy!" exclaimed Joan, and held out her hand. It was Mr. Roy, Mr. Ananda Roy, eldest son of the family to whose domestic circle Joan was designated, but he did not seem immediately inclined to admit it. He stood staring, full of astonishment and apparently of fear. Bepin, with a happy greeting, took a quick step and threw his arms about the youth. The customary embrace had a special pressure which reassured Mr. Roy, who then shook hands with Miss Mills, and stammered a word or two.

"He speaks English very badly, does he not?" cried Bepin laughing, and addressed Ananda in rapid Bengali.

"He says," declared Bepin gaily, "that he is delighted to find you care so much as to take the trouble to come this distance. And he is so astonished to see you that he has lost his tongue!"

Presently, however, Mr. Roy found it, and seemed ashamed of his perturbation. He smiled boldly at Joan.

"Never believe this fellow Bepin Behari," he told her jocularly. "He is known for a madcap. All is arranged for to-morrow evening," he went on, with an air of bravado, to Bepin. "There will be *no* hitch, I tell you. How are you getting on with the French Sweets?"

"I have no fancy for them," said Bepin, sending a swift glance at him. "I have brought Miss Mills to see our *asram*—only," at which, with an awkward laugh, Roy ran down the remaining steps and left them.

Bepin opened the door under the coloured glass transom and put in an exploring head. Without much zest he pushed it further open and stood aside to let Joan enter.

"It is the principal class-room," he said, "but please remember for the difference of custom."

The room was long and high and rather narrow, oval at one end, with two tall niches which were empty. It had six small windows near the rafters, three on each side, and the walls were distempered yellow, with a conventional dado design in brown and white. Everywhere over them were splashes and showers of what looked like red ink. In the middle hung a glass chandelier with a third of the pendants missing; and under it stood, littered with books and papers, what had once been a handsome mahogany dining-table. There were two or three dilapidated chairs, seven string beds, and nothing else. On one of them lay a shawled and muffled figure which did not move. An old man, with a drug-worn face and starting eyes, crouched over a hubble-bubble on the floor, and a pair of nesting sparrows twittered in the rafters. The place was oddly silent.

"It seems to be a dormitory," said Joan, retreating a step or two.

"The students sleep here also," admitted Bepin. "They are often far from well-to-do. That poor fellow has fever."

"And who is the old man—a caretaker?"

"No—an instructor. Ram Krishna is his name. He knows more Veda than any one, and has immense influence with the younger boys."

Bepin followed her glance at the walls.

"It is the red stain of the Holi festival," he told her

smiling, "in commemoration of Krishna. At that time all Hindus throw red on one another, and this year it was done even to excess," he added.

"Why this year?" asked Joan.

"It seemed to us symbolical," he said, and for an instant wondered whether he should recite to her his poem in the "Avatar" with the refrain—

"Red upon every hand,
Red up and down the street,
And red, red, bloom the lotuses about the Mother's feet.
Brothers, why so red?"

but this he did not do.

"In appealing to the imagination symbol, of course, is everything," commented Miss Mills. They had gone a few steps into the room, and she picked up a book from the table. It was "Thoughts on the French Revolution," by a Polish Jew. She put it down and took up a life of Mazzini. A copy of the *Illustrated London News*, thumbled and dirty, lay open at a set of very complete illustrations of the attempted assassination of King Alfonso of Spain on his wedding day, and her eye rested upon this also. Bepin put his hand on the volume lying nearest, and with a dexterous movement slipped it into his pocket. It was a Manual of Explosives. Joan turned over a few pages of the book about Mazzini and laid it down again.

"This is the literature of immortal deeds," she said. "One would expect to find it here."

As they turned to go her foot struck a small object on the floor, which rolled away. Bepin stooped and picked it up, hesitated, and showed it to her. It was a ball cartridge.

"The *asram* is also a volunteer association," he told her. "Outside I will show you something more."

She assented in silence, and they went down the steps again into the garden. He led the way across the grass to the clump of trees that still stood poetically against the setting sun; and she saw that on the largest, strips of bark hung down, exposing the white wood underneath. As they came up gashes and splinters showed, and the riddling of bullets.

"You practise here," said Joan calmly.

Volunteers, she knew, had to practise somewhere. "With rifles, I suppose."

"Sometimes," replied Bepin. "With revolvers also," he added lightly.

"You know that we break the law in doing this," he went on, intently watching her face. "You know that we are not allowed to possess arms,* we Indians—even to defend ourselves against wild beasts. You know that under your Government we are not men—they will not let us be men—"

"Do not say 'your Government,'" she told him passionately. "For my part I disavow it—now and for ever!"

"*Devi!*" † he cried; and catching at an end of a loose scarf she wore, he pressed it to his lips. Nevertheless, as they passed the godown where the floor was loose, he did not invite her to look at the matters stored beneath. Nor did he take her out by the movable board in the cow-house that led through his laboratory; nor did he say a word about certain iron cases that lay at the bottom of the tank under the peaceful gilding of the sun. For these fuller revelations he saw no present necessity. He had told her enough, and not too much, to win her; his heart was full of certainty and gratitude

* Bepin forgot to say "without licence."

† Goddess.

and praise, and lyrical with love. They picked their steps together through the casks and bales of Jaffer the Cabuli. Outside, a third-class hired carriage crawled empty towards Calcutta. Bepin hailed it joyfully.

"I am not worthy to see your face," he began, as they lurched into the long drive back. "I am only worthy to see your feet. But" * * *

CHAPTER XIX

"FATHER," said Joan the next morning after breakfast, "Bepin has asked me to marry him."

Mills finished filling his pipe. He put it in his mouth, reached for the matchbox, and deliberately lighted up. These preoccupations seemed to give weight to the silence with which he received her words.

"I could have told you some time ago that he had it in mind," was the reply when it came.

"But you didn't," said Joan.

"No," replied Vulcan, "I didn't."

He took the pipe from his mouth and looked at her.

"I thought it was just as well not. I thought it might upset you."

"I don't think it would have made any difference," Joan told him.

His glance had a ray of appreciation. There was to be no nonsense, then, in considering this matter.

"It would be to most young women," he said; but she let the compliment pass.

"I suppose," Vulcan went on guardedly, "you'll make up your own mind."

Her brows were drawn together in a frown of concentration. Having posed the subject she sat looking at it, with her elbow on the table and her chin in her hand.

"I'd like to know what you think," she said.

Her father hitched up his trousers at the knees, and sat down heavily within easy reach of the fireplace. He sat obliquely to Joan, and looked past her as he spoke.

"Marriage is a serious business," he said.

"Yes, father; but that's a platitude, you know."

"It may be a platitude, but it's the truth," he returned firmly. "Marriage is a very serious business. Even when the other party is of the same race and colour. When this is not the case it becomes, of course, a more serious business still. There are more risks to be taken. However, it is only fair to remember that the risks are the same to the other party—"

"Of course they are," said Joan. "I'm glad you reminded me of that."

"To my mind," her father went on deprecatingly, "equality's a great thing. Let the parties have the same customs, at all events. I myself married above me," he added.

There was an instant of discomfort and apprehension, in which a confidence seemed to hover with expanded wings; but Vulcan was true to his instincts, and nothing happened.

"It wasn't a success," he let fall briefly, and restored his pipe.

They knew, both of them, that they were going through formalities, were still considering the question, as it were, from afar. Such a subject could be introduced between them only in this way. With a world of emotion for principles and causes they had always been wary of sentiment toward each other. Their affection was shy of the words and caresses used by simpler people. That the matter was heavy between

them was indicated by the fact that Vulcan smoked on without opening the newspaper, which lay folded on his knee.

"There's one thing to be said," he took up again. "It's no ordinary proposal of marriage."

"No," Joan assented proudly, "I feel that."

"And I've good grounds to be satisfied that the young chap is in a first-rate position to make it," Vulcan went on, almost parentally.

"I have no reason to suppose he is wealthy," said Joan.

"He has no reason to suppose it either, I dare say. But he will be," her father said, as one to whom the fact had a certain reluctant importance.

They revolved this aspect in silence for a moment. Joan did not pursue her father's hint of information by so much as a curious glance. She had never known actual poverty, and had cultivated her ideas as independently on their five hundred a year as Lady Emily Phayre had on her five thousand. She even frowned a little as she said—

"I hope he will not have enough to induce him to change his way of living. If I—took this step—I should want to belong absolutely to the people—to live among them, wear their dress, adopt their habits, speak their language, think their thoughts—"

Vulcan gave her a startled look. The thing, then, was practicable—likely. He had been discussing it a little on its merits as a matrimonial idea, as if it were some other English girl that Bepin proposed to marry.

"Would it be possible?" he asked.

"It would be the only way," she replied. "I could not live like the Mukerjis, betwixt and between."

"You would cast off your own race altogether?" demurred Mills.

"In so far as they could not accept that of my adoption, I would."

Vulcan re-crossed his legs, took his pipe out of his mouth and held it in his hand. It was an act that gave his whole attention to the business before them.

"Then you're inclined to think favourably of the young man?" he said, with plain surprise.

Joan gave him a fallen glance, which he did not see. Their talk had not taken the turn she had instinctively hoped it would take. Her father, from whom she expected enthusiastic approval to stiffen her wavering determination, was not even giving it support. She fell back among her own uncertainties.

"I have a great affection for him as a friend. And he seems to want it very much. He thinks I should be helpful to the cause. And of course I should. But, as you say, father, marriage is a serious business," she added with rather a vague smile.

Vulcan shook his head, and kept a moment's silence. In that moment, no doubt, he tied the cords of the sacrifice, while his pipe went out.

"Perhaps you see it in the light of a duty," he suggested presently.

"Well, isn't it a duty—isn't it?" she exclaimed. "How else can one so completely devote one's self to these unhappy brow-beaten people, whose heart is spurned by the heel of our race! How can one do *anything* short of identifying one's self with them? And how little it is, how little, after all!"

"That's true enough, in a way of speaking. But—"

"The arrogance, the misunderstanding, the con-

tempt," she went on unheedingly. "In the whole world is there love enough to blot it out? What I feel, father, is that I *can't* keep myself back."

"You may be right, my girl—you may be right. But, of course, there's two sides to the question; and it can't be denied that these people do lay themselves out—"

He paused, suddenly aware, for the first time, of the Oriental attitude, suddenly able, for the first time, to excuse the British way of dealing with it. He felt himself almost capable of dealing in the British way with Bepin Behari Dey, ashamed as he was to confess it—he, Vulcan Mills.

"I sometimes feel a very strong influence, other than my own will, drawing me to marry Bepin," Joan went on, at which Vulcan looked sharply at her.

"Pay no attention to any such thing," he said. "Your own reason and judgment—that's what you must go by. Anything else is folly and superstition," and added the next instant, "Ganendra Thakore is very anxious to bring it about."

Joan looked up with a start of pleasure.

"Father—is he? How interesting!" she said.

"I believe it's the one wish he has left in the world," Vulcan told her.

"I think that ought to count with us," said Joan excitedly. "Don't you."

"As far as it goes," he replied gloomily.

"It would bring us very close to him, wouldn't it?" she mused. "We should be almost one family, Ganendra and Bepin and you and I. It would be a new bond, very sacred, very human, with this Indian cause that we have determined to stand for."

Vulcan passed a hand among his grey and shaggy

locks. She looked to him for response in kind, but what he said, with a sorry smile, was—

“I sometimes think if you had been a boy you might have been trained for the public platform, Jo.”

“I don’t know that I can justify it—but I think I should be glad to do a thing that Ganendra wants done,” she reflected.

“The man’s half a priest,” said her father aloud, but did not venture to utter the rest of his thought, which had to do with women and priestly influence.

“He is all a saint. And he is lying in a British prison, and British laws will find him a criminal, and a British Pilate will sentence him, washing his learned hands. I wonder the people do not sack that jail! Perhaps they will when you speak to them.”

“Nonsense!” said Mills. “What would they sack it with—pens and ink-pots? And it will be a Hindu Pilate in this case as it happens—that reactionary old Mukerji, whom they’ve bribed with a knighthood. No, there must be no lawlessness—I’ll put my foot down on that. I shall resist the law myself, with a motive and a reason, but that’s my affair. They can lock me up with Ganendra if they like.”

Joan got up and crossed the room to the typewriter, from which she released some pages of folio.

“It’s a magnificent speech, father,” she said, adding them to a pile on the table. “Far finer than your attack on the Lords at Cardiff, or even the National Liability for Unemployment one. This has a ring that will carry. I’ve made the six copies.”

“It’s what I want said in England,” replied Vulcan. “And what I’ll stand for here. We need hardly trouble about the Anglo-Indian press, but the *Bengali Free Press* can have a copy, and the rest we’ll post home. I

don't want any misrepresentation, and when I'm on my feet I'll say something very like yon."

"I wonder," said Joan, "if the *Times* will take it in full."

Vulcan laughed shortly.

"The day is at hand when there'll be very little that has to do with this country that the *Times* won't take in full," he told her.

Joan sat down again, and they brought themselves back, with a wrench, to the matter in hand.

"Then you think you'll perhaps be suited with Bepin?" suggested Mills.

"I suppose I must decide, father, one way or another," Joan said, and paused. "You yourself have always believed in the mingling of the races, haven't you? You have always thought that the prejudice against it was the mere survival of a tribal fetish, and that the world of the future would be one people?"

"Those are certainly my general views," replied Vulcan, none too willing. Again he kept back the other half of his thought, which was, "But you are my particular and only daughter."

"Then in theory you would not object," stated Joan, as if summarising all that could be said.

"No. In theory I would not object," replied Vulcan, assenting to the finality of that way of putting it. They were creatures of theory, both of them. They doubted the heart, and suspected the blood, and denied the claims of kin, but to any paper edict of the reason they stood loyal and obedient.

The girl, assailed by her private doubts and those reluctances which persisted in obscuring all other aspects of the thing she had to decide, was not yet satisfied.

"I thought that you might possibly have some personal feeling about it, father," she said.

She leaned forward as she spoke, and laid her hand on his knee. He covered it with his own, and they had their moment of unspoken things. When he did articulate, it was nothing remarkable that he said.

"I shall be sorry to lose you, my girl," he told her ; "but that is a point of view I could never allow myself to take."

At that she kissed him a little awkwardly and went out of the room. Vulcan, left alone, felt the bowl of his pipe, found it cold, and laid it by. He sat for a long time thinking without that solace, the unopened newspaper on the floor beside him. It may have crossed his mind, not unreasonably, that it was hard to be invited to the act of Abraham without any compensating faith in Abraham's God. But he did not hesitate on that account, and to this extent, plain man though he was, no doubt he soared above the patriarch.

CHAPTER XX

“OF course we’ll have trouble,” said Beauchamp. He and Sir Robert Farquhar and Michael Foley were dining with John Game at the Calicut Club. The wind blew across the Maidan from the south, and it enticed most of the men to dine in the upper verandah, where the array of little tables and broad shirt fronts and hastening servants under the electric light made a sumptuous spectacle across the Club garden from the populous darkness of Chowringhee Road. It was Saturday night—guest night—and there was pomfret from Bombay, the soup was turtle from Port Blair, and the first strawberries waited a later moment from Dinapore. In Chowringhee and the indistinguishable Maidan that stretched beyond, the tides of life were negligible, vague, indigenous, but there, lighted up, lifted up and definite, the Romans of the Calicut Club banquetted imperially as usual on Saturday night.

“Of course we’ll have trouble,” said Beauchamp, Commissioner of Police.

He spoke of the trial of Ganendra Thakore, which was to begin on Monday. They had been thinking of very little else at the Headquarters in Lal Bazar for a fortnight.

“I don’t see any particular reason to anticipate it,” said Sir Robert Farquhar, dividing his attention with the pomfret. “Things are just as quiet as they can be. But I suppose you fellows can smell that sort of thing.”

"They're waiting," said Beauchamp. "They've had the word. But we expect to see the high-water mark for the year over this trial."

"I see Lakji has arrived from Lahore," put in Game.

"Yes, and he's a stormy petrel. Where Master Lakji perches, and especially where he perches unexpectedly, double your force, is the way we put it in the office."

"Well, he perched with me last night," chuckled the Home Member comfortably. "We had him to dinner. He led the conversation, too. It's the best way of taking these fellows, I think."

"Lakji's a cynical brute," said Foley. "Dine and wine and undermine—that's Lakji. Goes home and does the loyal heart and the glistening eye to Offord, while as a matter of fact he's father and mother to the whole seditious movement. I hear he boasted the other day that he had never held office under the British Raj and never would. I'd much rather tackle the open irreconcilable like Ganendra."

"Not father and mother, I think," corrected Game. "Uncle and aunt, perhaps—a relation more advisory and less responsible."

"It's a great deal better not to let them think you're taking notice," said Sir Robert. "Just go quietly on with the repairs and alterations, independent of the lot of 'em, the way Campden is doing. He's quite sound there, in my opinion. Up to a certain point," he added prudently, "we can't give them a constitution before they've got a back-bone."

Nobody contradicted the Home Member, and Foley came back to the trial.

"I agree with Beauchamp," he said. "Ganendra

will give us a run for our money. I suppose Sir Kristodas has been handing most of his correspondence over to you lately," he said to the policeman.

"He sent us two or three threatening letters last week ; but I hear he's been getting more."

"Bushels," said Foley. "Disgusting stuff—unspeakable, unprintable, a lot of it. Some of the writers abuse the daughter as well, which is foolish, for at heart I imagine the Rani is as hot a little rebel as they make 'em."

"You don't tell me that!" said Sir Robert. "We have always thought her a nice girl. She comes to the house."

"I think you're wrong there, Foley," said Game. "The Rani is politically quite sound. I wish there were more like her."

Beauchamp lifted his glass of hock and looked reservations into it. "We've got her on the list," he said.

"Well, take her off," Game advised him. "She's an uncommonly loyal, useful little person."

"Sir Kristo is staunch enough anyway," said Foley. "I wanted him to send the letters over to me, and I would go through them and burn them for him ; but, no, he's got a queer curiosity about them and reads every one. The merely terrorist ones, signed in blood and all that, don't worry him much ; but he's been getting all kinds of appeals to what you might call his religious honour, uncommonly well-written too, some of 'em. The old man doesn't like that. I've seen him quite shaken once or twice. But he'll see us through," added Foley.

"It's a mistake, I think, to put a Hindu on to a case like this," said Sir Robert. "It's asking too much of him. A precedent much better not made."

"The old man will play the game," repeated Foley.

"The line of our bold defenders is fairly quaint," Beauchamp said.

"Ain't it?" laughed Foley. "I saw the letter—it was genuine enough. Ram Kissen Pal got it—he's leading counsel for Ganendra, though I don't suppose he'll open his mouth. 'If a hair of that old man is touched, or a European bone broken, the streets of Calcutta will run with blood. We are ready, aye ready. Be warned. Signed, Twenty men of the Ainslie Highlanders.' Ram Kissen stuck it up, for general information, in the Bar Library."

"The Ainslies ought to be sent back to Nowshera," remarked Game. "They're developing too much humour, shut up here in the Fort."

"And what's the truth of this yarn about Kolapatta?" asked Sir Robert. "Game, this is prime beef. I wish we could get such beef as this out of my fellow."

"Poor little Kolapatta—I'm afraid they've been getting round him so completely that one of these days he won't see any way out," said Game. "It's quite true that he did buy that old fort on the Naringa Estate, and began to repair it. Jotindra Pal is an ardent extremist when nobody is looking; and I believe he got the contract."

"I saw Kolapatta the other day," chuckled Sir Robert. "'Well, Rajah,' I said to him, 'what's this new summer-house you've been buying? When are you going to take me over it?' I said. He told me he'd been getting terribly deaf lately."

"He may be a bit fed up with people wanting to see his summer-house," put in Beauchamp. "Scatter took it into his head he wanted to see it too. You know Major Scatter, sir, of the Limericks? The

regiment were in camp of exercise at Grantpore, about forty miles from Fort Naringi, and old Tom Scatter got *khubber* of this new toy of Kolapatta's. His C.O. being at home on leave, Scatter is commanding just now; and he was playing about the country with his men most days. So without saying a word he marched a couple of companies over, and sure enough there they were, plastering it up like anything. There was a Babu who said there was nobody at home, but Scatter said he'd be glad of the accommodation all the same, and gave the order to bivouac inside. Snaky hole he said it was, too. Next morning Kolapatta and his contractor arrived in doolies, and Scatter met 'em with the language of apology, but said he couldn't have been more comfortable. Since when, I believe, the repairs have been countermanded."

"What does it all amount to?" demanded Sir Robert with disparagement.

"Nothing, by itself," said Game.

"Kolapatta's a tool, of course," Foley told them. "He didn't want the fort any more than he wants to subscribe to the funds of the national movement. But I imagine there was a scheme for exterminating a magistrate or two."

"It reminds me of Tom Sawyer," pronounced Sir Robert with a broad grin.

It was said that Sir Robert Farquhar, in his solid imperviousness to events, fitly represented the foundations of the British Empire.

"Or Drury Lane," said Foley. "What I want to know is, where is the money coming from? There's a lot going on that wants financing, and gets it. Fellows like Kolapatta are giving; they're afraid not to; but they ain't giving much. The mass of the people

haven't been touched for a pice. Where are the legitimate sources of supply?"

Beauchamp, to whom they all looked, sat back in his chair, a repository of unuttered things.

"Legitimate," he said. "Funny word. We heard of a mohunt being pretty badly squeezed the other day. In the sacred name of their country they applied lighted candles to his toes, and then made him sign a deed of gift for all they took. The odd thing is he wouldn't report it. Officially we know nothing about it."

"Plunder is one of their authorised methods," remarked Game. "The seditious press openly advises it. 'Do as the Mahrattas did, in the days when India was glorious,' said the *Avatar* only this morning."

"Well," said Sir Robert, "so far as I can make out the present Government at home will be reduced to very much the same straits, if they are to come back to office with the assistance of their Socialist friends. I used to think Lloyd-George was a bit of a Mahratta; but upon my word, if they keep their promises, the next Chancellor of the Exchequer will have some toe-and-candle work cut out for him!"

"Is it quite certain," Game asked them, "that the coalition will hold as it is? The *Times* this week is distinctly premonitory of a shuffle."

"The hope of a more workable combination lies in the Labour party itself," said Foley. "The indications are pretty plain that they are sick of their own extremists. The clearing out to Canada of that steel concern in Northumberland the other day did them a lot of good. The British working man is beginning to take Utopia off the map. Once they shed their faddists they're good enough company for any Government."

Sir Robert, who was a Liberal at home and at heart, shook his head.

"They can't afford it," he said. "Top and Bottom they are; and if there's a split in the Bottom down they come. It isn't as if they had anything to rouse the country with. Look at the speeches so far—fair sickening they are. Every cock crowing on his own midden."

"I'm not so sure," said Game slowly, "that they won't have something to rouse the country with by the time they want it."

"Do you mean India?" asked Sir Henry.

"Yes," said Game, "I do. It wouldn't take so much either. For the last quarter of a century the British public has been led by the nose about India, like a sentimental sheep. That will come one of these days to an end quite suddenly. We are like that. You can tie us up with blue ribbon for a time, and then something happens—"

"Some dramatic incident," said Sir Robert.

"Some dramatic incident. Then people will remember what India means."

"Well, let us hope there'll be no dramatic incident before the end of March," said Sir Robert. "I've no wish to help them win their election—I think the other side would do just as well for us. Offord's not what I call a practical man."

"Already there's a lot of uneasiness at home," said Foley. "They're a great deal more uncomfortable than anybody is here. And the feeling about this chap Mills is growing much less tolerant."

"Aye," said the Home Member. "That's pretty clear in the tone of despatches. I gather they're losing all patience with friend Vulcan."

"I didn't know he'd been made a subject of reference," said Foley.

"No—how should you? Oh yes, we've been talking back and forth. There's no telling what exigency may arise, and it's as well to be prepared. But nothing will happen. The man's a gas-bag."

"They won't let us lay a finger on him," said Foley.

"In their own interests I wouldn't advise it myself," remarked Sir Robert. "It's too ticklish—they can't afford it. But there'll be no occasion. None whatever. Mills is not altogether a fool. He'll keep on the right side of the law. And they won't chuck him—not they."

"By the way, Beauchamp," said Game, with a fresh interest in his voice, "have you been sent for yet? I advised Lord Campden to see you personally, and satisfy himself about the details in case we have to handle Mills."

Beauchamp, who had been for some time listening and eating his dinner, finished his last strawberry and laid the stem neatly on the side of his plate. Leaning forward with one hand on each of his well-covered thighs, he made to the conversation what was certainly the contribution of the evening.

"The man's a gas-bag, Sir Robert, as you say, and a damned explosive gas-bag, if you ask me. I spent most of this morning with the Viceroy—Stevenson Spence telephoned me to come over just as I got to office. Oddly enough, one of my men brought me rather an important piece of information as I was starting, and I was able to lay it before His Excellency direct. It went on to you as soon as I got back——"

"I've seen nothing," interrupted the Home Secretary.

"Nor I," said Sir Robert sceptically.

"No—to-day's a holiday for you chaps, ain't it?"

Well, I gather that if occasion arises, you propose to get leave to use your judgment in dealing with this gentleman. And I think I can assure you, as I assured H. E., that occasion will arise."

"We'll not get leave," said the Home Member.

"Port, Sir Robert?" asked John Game, lifting the decanter.

"What sort of occasion?" Foley demanded.

"That," replied Beauchamp with a glance at the Home Member, "we shall all discover before long, I fancy. To my mind the Criminal Code isn't big enough to cover our friend, if we could get it into operation, which we can't. But I hadn't realised before," added the Commissioner of Police, looking round with a beam of reminiscent gratification, "what a plucky beggar the V. is. He's game for anything."

"Ah," said his host, as the wine came back to him and he filled his own glass. "Really!" he added absent-mindedly. Beauchamp's veiled communication had certainly a strong political interest; but the course it suggested to the Home Secretary was a private one. Before his guests had finished their after-dinner cheroots, and while the four men still sat together watching from the verandah the moving lights of Maidan and river, Game told himself that he could not defer obtaining the right to protect Joan Mills in any emergency, for another day.

CHAPTER XXI

THE house in Nagtollah was a long way from the Calicut Club in Chowringhee, a long and devious way which members of the Calicut Club seldom crossed even in imagination. And the gate of the house in Nagtollah was closed, and the surroundings insanitary, and the entrance obscure through the house of Jaffer the Cabuli. Yet I imagine none of John Game's guests, that Saturday night, would have hesitated to leave the round table in the Club verandah and transfer themselves to the immediate neighbourhood of the house in Nagtollah if they had known how interesting and unusual an incident was taking place there. Especially Beauchamp. Beauchamp would have been uncommonly intrigued. But the darkness covered it, and the street-lamps flickered round it, and the south wind blew over it, and no one in the Calicut Club knew anything at all about it.

The odd thing was that constables should be there at all. It would have struck Beauchamp as further surprising that they should be district police, since all the district men he had drafted in, a few days before, on special duty, were quartered in another part of the town. But there they were, six of them, all upstanding fellows in the regulation red turbans, blue coats, leather belts, and brass badges of the country force, each carrying the *lathi* Beauchamp considered such a futile weapon and had written reams to get discontinued. Each tunic,

moreover, bulging in one spot with an arm which would certainly have made Beauchamp inquire where they were going. They were a sportive lot, and chaffed one another unmercifully as they gathered in the room with the red-splashed walls and the coloured transom. One of them had curly hair and wore spectacles.

Presently they were filing through the shop of Jaffer, who treated them with respect and anxiety, beholding the raid he had long anticipated. Outside they formed up. One took command—the one with the curly hair and spectacles—and so they set forth, two and two, in the long swinging march of the Indian police, to the northern railway station at Sealdah. Men made way for them in the narrow streets, where still many trades plied in the evening; ox-carts creaked to one side; beggars cringed. Their authority was unquestioned even where they had no need to exert it; theirs was the power the people knew. Along the humbler routes they talked and laughed among themselves, and those who crouched against the wall saw with relief that they were in a good-natured mood. Once when they crossed a more important thoroughfare, a comrade in the white uniform of the city force hailed them from the street corner.

"Ghar jata, bhai?" *

"Aur kya, bhai?" † replied the one in charge; and a subdued chuckle ran among the others, as they left their interlocutor on his beat.

At the station a khaki-clad chota-sahib with gilt buttons was getting out of a shabby hired carriage with a lady friend, and the six halted at a respectful distance to see what he would do. It would not be suitable for

* "Going home, brothers?"

† "What else, brother?"

a Sub-Inspector of Police in a red turban to press to the wicket until after an Inspector of Police in a pith helmet had taken such accommodation as met his convenience. The sahib in khaki bought a ticket for his lady friend, and passed close to the policeman as he returned with it.

"*Aiyes right!*" commanded the Sub-Inspector ; and the men saluted.

He in the khaki, lately retired as a corporal from a British regiment, cast an indifferent eye upon the district draft, returned the salute, to which he was not entitled, with an uplifted finger, and went with a more important step to see how many tin trunks he could stow into a second-class compartment reserved for ladies. After which the Sub-Inspector from Nagtollah purchased third-class tickets for himself and his men for Putwa, thirty miles north, and they took their places. In the few minutes before the train started the Sub-Inspector's red turban appeared more than once between the iron bars of the third-class window, observing his superior in khaki, who stood upon the platform exchanging last words with a ladies' compartment a few feet away.

"You need not be nervous, at all events," he heard the man in khaki say. "You have a whole draft on board with you ;" and from the policeman's expression, which was intelligent and amused, one would say that he understood.

The compartment held eight, and was full, the other two being small shopkeepers of a village beyond Putwa, who huddled into their corners with a wary eye and a genial word for the constables. The train whistled at last and drew out, taking six blue uniforms and red turbans sitting decorously three and three, and leaving

on the platform an Inspector of Calcutta Police, who took off his pith helmet elaborately to a lady in a second-class carriage.

They produced *pan* and shared it, chewing and talking among themselves in Hindustani, which the villagers did not understand.

"They are men of up-country," said one of these to the other, in Bengali. "Whose heads will be broken to-night?"

At which the Sub-Inspector with the curly hair and spectacles turned to him and said boldly in the same tongue—

"The heads of no honest men, brother."

His comrades laughed applausively, and one of them took up the sentiment.

"Is the law to be kept, or not, brother?"

"Without doubt it is to be kept, honourable," replied the villager abashed. "Who has been breaking it, in our parts, if it may be known?"

"A man of importance," responded the Sub-Inspector. "A man with a front like the front of Ganesh. A very evil man."

"What is his offence?" asked the second villager.

"His offence is that he has served his country with words and eaten her with deeds," replied the policeman, amid the laughter of the others; and the countrymen, understanding that they had not been answered, subsided into silence.

"Our legs are long, and want stretching, brothers," said the Sub-Inspector to them at the first stop; and at the hint they bundled out, nothing loth.

It was ten o'clock when the train reached Putwa, and the night was dark. Putwa looked, under its kerosine lamp, like a gravelled platform and a box. A hundred

yards away, along a cow-path, a dozen mud huts huddled together, eyeless in the daytime, dead at night. Near by, the round heads of mango trees stood dark against the sky, and the muddy edge of a pond showed the deep hoof-marks of buffalo. The station water-carrier came up with his brass cup and his goat-skin; but they waved him away, and he hurried for other custom along the waiting train. The Babu station-master, with his pen behind his ear and his hands behind his back, looked at them curiously, but they had nothing to say to him either. After a word or two of consultation they struck definitely across country, and the night swallowed them up.

They reached the main road of the district, marched for an hour, and then took off through a jungle path to a hamlet, with country estates on either side of the road beyond. A pair of village constables, loafing about the flaring oil wicks of a sweetmeat seller, got up uneasily as the strangers approached.

"Ram! Ram!" they said in greeting.

"Where are your uniforms, you jungle-wallahs?" demanded the Sub-Inspector in Bengali. "I shall report you for being on duty without them. Fall in here—if you have nothing better to do than eat *gour** for which you have not paid, we can find work for you."

The constables came along with alacrity.

"Towhat house go you, brothers?" asked one of them.

"To the house of Jotindra Babu," said the Sub-Inspector. "We have heavy business there."

"It is the next but one," returned the constable. "The house with the blue gate. The zenana is there at present," he added. "They are seven, and the ornaments are very good."

* Country sugar.

"Be silent, *soor*,"* said the Sub-Inspector; "what have we to do with women's ornaments?" (Certainly Beauchamp would have been edified to hear him.) "We go to bring justice upon a very evil man. Ho, *Durwan*! *Durwan* of the house of Jotindra Babu! Open!"

They beat with their *lathies* upon the wood, and the face of a terrified gate-keeper showed in a crack. Pushing in, the Sub-Inspector with the curly hair ordered the village men to guard the house and let no one either in or out.

"And if strict watch is kept, so that our business is done without trouble and interruption, I may from mercy say nothing about your shameful *dhoties*,"† said he.

A light shone at an open door of the house, and a portly Babu with an extremely disconcerted look stood within. It was not Jotindra Babu, but a relation of equal size, who had not yet gone to bed. The Sub-Inspector salaamed.

"Our business is with Jotindra Babu," said he. "We come to search his house. It will be well to give him this word at once, and to say that if he makes no trouble all will be done without disturbance, but otherwise noise and alarm cannot be avoided."

"Jotindra Babu has retired to the Inside," said the relation, with trembling lips. "How can I disturb him?"

"It is necessary to disturb him," said the arm of the law with spectacles; and the portly relative disappeared without further protest.

Nevertheless it was some minutes before Jotindra, very pale and clad principally in a sheet, answered the

* Pig.

† Loin cloths.

summons. The portly relative had refused point-blank to conduct the business, whatever it was, in his place; and this took time. He came at last, however; and at his appearance the Sub-Inspector strode across the room and laid a hand on his fat and shaking shoulder. The action smacked a little of the Amateur Dramatic performances of the Calcutta University.

"Jotindra Babu, there is an order to search your house," he said.

Jotindra was speechless. He stood staring, afraid to commit himself even by a question.

"Where is your warrant?" asked the relative.

"Here!" said the Sub-Inspector, striking his breast.

"Show it to us," said the relative.

"I will show it if you wish, but if you give me this trouble it will be the worse for you," replied the Sub-Inspector. "Come now, get your keys and lead the way."

"What is the reason of this order?" quavered Jotindra, the tears running down his face. "I am law-abiding citizen."

"No one denies that," said the Sub-Inspector. "But you have been very foolish, Babu-ji. Why did the Standing Committee of the Bharata Defence Association meet here last Saturday?"

"I entertained those gentlemen to fireworks only," wept Jotindra.

"There is also *pucca* information that you have here considerable funds of that Association, that you have arms in your possession without license, also that you are harbouring manufacture of explosives on the premises," went on the Sub-Inspector in sudden English; and Jotindra answered in his perturbation in the same tongue.

"It is lies!" he exclaimed wildly. "There is no firearm here, and I can show receipt for all sums collected! This is police conspiracy against innocent person! I refuse giving my keys! I refuse showing my house!"

The Sub-Inspector's hand went to his tunic, and the hands of the five other policemen went to their tunics.

"Then," he said to Jotindra, "I shoot you dead." Six revolvers had slipped out of the six blue uniforms.

"Then we shoot you dead," said another policeman, and took a step nearer.

Jotindra clutched at his sheet and flung up an arm to defend himself.

"Don't do *that*!" he screamed. "Ram! Ram! You are budmashes!"

"I think better not defy authority, brother," said the relative Babu. "You can submit complaint of outrage later."

"That is well spoken," said the Sub-Inspector. "For your part you can go and reassure the ladies. Not so much as a flower shall fall on them. Take them all into one apartment and remain there with them. We will even remove our boots so as to give them the least alarm possible. He will come with us."

So, leaving one man on guard, the five went softly into the inner and upper part where Jotindra kept his safe, his boxes of ornaments and jewellery, and his zenana. Apparently all the keys were not immediately available, for now and then the crash of an axe or the sound of rending wood came through to the watcher, who thoughtfully shut the outer door. In about an hour and a half the lights ceased to move about the upper storey, and the party returned, the miserable Jotindra walking before, carrying some of the spoil. They put it all on

the table, and there, under the lamp and the haggard regards of Jotindra, who produced a pen and paper, they made a careful list of it, banknotes, necklaces bangles, nose-rings and all. For seditious matter they found two old copies of the *Lamp of Youth* and a catapult.

"There is much talk of police oppression," the Sub-Inspector told the victim, "but if you are proved innocent all will be returned to you."

It was nearly three in the morning, and one or two of the policemen showed signs of impatience, but the Sub-Inspector insisted upon careful packing of the fragile things into the boxes they were to be carried away in. Jotindra himself assisted, dropping tears among the paper. At last all was ready; each man shouldered his burden, and left the house in orderly procession.

The village constables were hanging curiously about the gate, and the Sub-Inspector with the curly hair gave them orders to remain on the beat till daylight. It was all very well, even artistically carried out. There had been, as he had boasted to Bepin Behari Dey the afternoon before, *no hitch*, and only one omission. The omission, on the part of five only, very simple in the light of a zeal for duty and a desire to get away, was to resume their boots.

If they had looked back they would have seen Jotindra Babu and his portly relative considering the boots.

CHAPTER XXII

MRS. FOLEY sat in her pretty drawing-room awaiting the arrival of her usual Sunday lunch-party. John Game was coming, and the Rani Janaki, Mr. Stevenson Spence, Private Secretary to the Viceroy ; the nice Macphersons, and two or three other people, but nobody had come yet. Mrs. Foley had been to church, and wore the subdued yet deserving look that rests upon church-goers. Michael, I regret to say, had been golfing at Tollygunge, and had returned from that resort only just in time to change for luncheon. So Mrs. Foley sat alone.

She looked up from her book as a servant appeared in the door, but he brought in only a letter.

"These eternal chits!" she said aloud, as she signed the peon-book and glanced at the handwriting.

"From Joan," she told herself, and put it down unopened to welcome Janaki, who came fluttering in, large-eyed, like some shy tropical bird.

"So glad to see you, dear," said Mrs. Foley. "Isn't this simply torrid for the middle of February? Shall we have the punkahs? I think so;" and she touched an electric button in the wall.

The whirling fans at the ceiling lifted the delicate draperies about Janaki's head as she dropped into an armchair, and half closed her eyes under the cool stirring of the air. She looked passionately resigned,

bound in acquiescence. Her fetters were almost as palpable as the bracelets on her arm.

"Delicious," she said. "I dare not begin punkahs yet. Father is so afraid of chills."

Her eyelids sank quite down, and made two dark crescents of lashes upon her cheeks.

"Dear Rani," said Mrs. Foley with concern, "you look a spirit. You mustn't stay down this hot weather. Come to Simla with me."

Janaki moved her head in silent dissent, but did not open her eyes, of which the lashes grew slowly wet. For an instant she kept them shut; then she said almost inaudibly—

"The Government of India is always giving us benefits that we do not want."

"What are you thinking of, dear?"

"The abolition of *suttee*," said this Hindu widow, entrapped in the snares of the flesh. "It was a cruel thing to abolish *suttee*."

"Oh, Rani, how morbid of you!" cried Lucy, and took the slender hand that hung over the arm of Janaki's chair. It lay in her own like a little dead bird.

"The messenger asks if there is any answer to the letter," interrupted the servant, appearing again in the door.

"Oh, bother—no! Well, wait a minute. Do you mind, dear, if I just find out?"

Mrs. Foley tore off the end of Joan's note, which disclosed itself in two sheets.

"Why, what is all this?" she said, casting a hurried eye over it. Janaki, with an indifferent glance, recognised the handwriting, and a sudden leaping of apprehension dried the moisture about her eyes. Her head

lay quiet on its cushion, and the fingers that played with the edge of her *sari* ceased to move. She knew, or thought she knew, the only probable reason for a letter of such length from Joan Mills.

"Janaki," cried Mrs. Foley, "you will be interested in this; but oh, what will you think of it? Myself I don't know *what* to think of it! Joan Mills is engaged!"

Janaki looked at Lucy, with the arrow in her bosom. She opened her lips once or twice ineffectually, while Mrs. Foley struggled with her own amazement. Then she succeeded in saying—

"But we have seen it coming, haven't we?"

Lucy glanced at her, and cried with quick contrition, "Oh, not to Mr. Game, Janaki dear! To Mr. Bepin Behari Dey!"

"Another memsahib comes," said the servant in the door; and Mrs. Foley, not unthankfully, turned away from the Rani Janaki and advanced to meet the nicest of the Mrs. Macphersons.

The rest arrived in quick succession; John Game was the last to come. At sight of him Lucy slipped Joan's letter, like a guilty secret, into the book she had been reading. She could find hardly anything to say to him, with his sentence lying there among the pages; she was glad Michael did not know. Game crossed over almost at once to the Rani, and Lucy saw with despair that Janaki, looking crushed and frightened and desolate, had no responses for him.

"She hasn't taken it in," said Mrs. Foley to herself. At lunch they were all separated. Lucy, whose eye wandered from every subject, saw that John Game's face looked more than usually lean and resolute. "Does he know?" she asked herself. If he did know

he talked with surprising animation to Mrs. Macpherson. Janaki, who sat in a strange silence, eating nothing, also looked once or twice at him, furtive, fascinated looks, but she did not ask herself whether he knew. She knew that he did not; and Mrs. Foley was wrong in supposing that she had not taken it in—very completely in. She was suffering now because he would suffer presently on account of another woman. It was a new barb and a sharp one. She could not feel or see beyond it.

John himself was in excellent spirits.

"Rani," he said to her unexpectedly across the round table, "have you any more surprises for me?" and she went so pale as she shook her head with an effort at a smile, that he repented of his levity.

"Do you prosecute for the Crown to-morrow, Foley?" asked Mr. Macpherson.

"Pleased to say I don't. It's the Advocate-General's job. But it's given me a poisonous lot of work," said Foley.

"Can they hang this Baboo?" asked a young man from the Fort.

"Technically they might, if the charge had been murder. He was the cause of the death of two people," Michael replied. "But he's to be tried for sedition. On the evidence the jury must convict; the sentence, of course, rests with the Judge."

"I hear they're putting some Hindu rotter on to try it," resumed the young man from the Fort. "That's pretty average lunacy, ain't it?"

"They're putting the soundest lawyer on the Bench to try it," his host checked him. "It's a new departure, but it is well timed."

Lucy stole a concerned glance at the soundest

lawyer's daughter, and saw that, though apparently listening intelligently, she had not heard.

"Has much gone home, do you suppose, Foley, about this trial?" asked Stevenson Spence.

"A great deal more than there's any kind of need for. One newspaper man told me this morning he had been instructed to wire very fully. It's a case of the more information the worse ignorance."

"I don't know—I don't know about that," retorted the Private Secretary. "For my part the more completely the British voter is informed about the game of fellows like Ganendra Thakore, the better pleased I shall be. The sins of the Government are rubbed in hard enough, with this new public commission by special correspondent dodge, and a Radical editor sitting in judgment in Fleet Street. Those chaps know well enough they've got to find readable, sensational, iniquitous matter—and they find it."

The voice was the voice of Stevenson Spence, but the sentiments were recognised to come from a superior source; and they were heard with interest.

"I hear that Lakji has arranged to cable the whole of the defence to the *Daily Record* at his own expense," said Game.

"Who is the *Times* man in Calcutta?" asked Macpherson. "Surely he can be relied upon to send both sides."

"Of course he can," replied Foley. "But what's the good of the *Times* in a matter like this? Every reader of the *Times* is the friend of law and order already. You don't want to convert the Church. The oracle now issues at a halfpenny, and Cabinets dance to the tune of the man on the top of the 'bus."

"As a matter of fact," he went on, "the whole of the interest at home in this Ganendra business has been excited by Mills, and his being out here. Otherwise what is sedition in India to a test match? Nothing."

"The modern writing on the wall," observed Stevenson Spence gloomily, "is done with posters"; and for at least half a minute the little company looked grave.

"All the same, isn't there a report," said Macpherson to Stevenson Spence, "that the ice is getting rather thin for Vulcan?"

"March ice, in the British islands, is seldom to be depended on," said the Private Secretary with a short laugh. "Mills may regret the day he ever saw India."

He said no more; he had the discretion which is the only virtue really necessary to a Private Secretary, but it was enough to make his host look at him with a certain speculative interest. Why, indeed, should Mr. Vulcan Mills, who stood for at least a score of votes in the House of Commons, regret the day he ever saw India?

"Well, hang it all, most of us do, don't we?" gaily remarked the young man from the Fort. "I hoped it would be a good deal worse than that!" and in the general laugh that ensued Mrs. Foley managed to drag the conversation to the probable winner of the paper-chase cup.

Janaki had slipped away before the men came into the drawing-room. She went home to her father and her religious adviser; but Yadava found her singularly far, that night, from any touch of his finger upon her spirit. Mrs. Foley's luncheon-party soon followed. The young men from the Fort went about their important affairs;

the nice Macphersons made their nice farewells; only John Game lingered till nearly four.

"Are you going on to the Victoria Club?" Lucy asked him, as he held out his hand at last.

"No," he said, "I am going to the Grand Hotel. Joan has promised to see me there at four. I met her here, you know," he announced as shy as any school-boy. "Wish me luck."

His little friend responded with more than half a tone of misery in her voice.

"My dear man, I wish you all the luck possible," she said.

CHAPTER XXIII

JOAN was typing when Game came in ; she did not immediately look up. Vulcan had gone out ; his pipe lay on the mantelpiece and testified of him. As John approached she lifted a serious face and gave him a preoccupied hand.

"Excuse me—will you—just a minute?" she said. "Father is depending on me for these corrections."

The Home Secretary looked at the type-written pages with very considerable discomfort. Beauchamp had stayed behind the others at the club the night before, and had repaid an excellent dinner with the piece of information that had not yet reached Game in the natural order of the despatch-box, the piece of information that the Commissioner of Police owed to the smartest of his native subordinates, Sub-Inspector Ram Chunder Mullick, born on the land of the zemindar whose own son was Sri Yadava, pundit and priest. Game, with his mind full of Mills' projected speech, and the situation it would create, had very little doubt of what was in the type-written pages ; he wanted the right to ask. What he would do with the certainty when he had it, he would settle with his official conscience later. Without revealing anything of what he knew of his Department's intentions—and what he knew was momentous—he felt that he would be justified in using every means to dissuade Vulcan from delivering his address at the close of the trial. He might bring

confusion upon Beauchamp and spoil a record bag for the Viceroy, who was a sportsman ; but these considerations, though distinguished, were not the only ones. On public grounds there could be no doubt that the speech would be better undelivered, and certainly the private grounds were strong enough. The immediate and rather queer necessity was that he, John Game, C.S.I., Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department, should somehow obtain the privilege of identifying himself with the best interests of Mr. Vulcan Mills and his daughter before circumstances would make such identification about as difficult as any task he could find for himself. There was no time to lose.

Joan heightened his difficulty. She was a person born to heighten difficulties. As if she took some telepathic signal from him while he sat silent, with an eye that avoided the pile of script, she said—

“We are making trouble for you, Mr. Game, father and I. And I am afraid we will make more. I am so sorry.”

John flushed and frowned. It seemed a calm declaration of war in the guise of an apology. And a declaration of war that was neither pertinent nor important, that ought to find no answer but to be brushed aside by the strong arm of his passion. Nevertheless he chose his reply warily ; he dared not make a light one.

“I am sure you have no wish to do that,” he said.

She leaned forward, clasping her knees. Her eyes still held the torch lighted by what she had been doing ; she wore a charming colour, and her resolute lips had a beauty in spite of their resolution.

“You expect me to say, ‘Oh no ;’ but I am afraid I can’t, Mr. Game. I am afraid I *do* wish to make trouble for you.”

Then he allowed his impatience to escape.

"Oh," he said, "what difference does it make? Between two human beings what is a point of view?"

She looked at him seriously, willing to dispute. Hers was a mind that would argue anything, at any time.

"I think," she said, "that it ought to make all the difference. Perhaps not in theory; but I am only flesh and blood. I admit being governed by my feelings."

The philosopher in the discussion took the rôle assigned to him with rather a blank look.

"You have made all the trouble in the world for me already," he blurted out. "All the trouble that matters. I have had no peace—none, I assure you—since you came between my eyes and everything I used to see. Be satisfied with that. I love you—good God! By now you must know it. Forget these unhappy Bengalis just long enough to tell me you will marry me, Joan."

She tapped the table with her blue pencil. "And after?" she said dispassionately. Her tapping of the table was final and definitive, if he could have known. He took a discomfort from it, but hurried on.

"And after, we will settle everything. I will explain everything—you will understand everything. You will find a new focus for the affairs of this perplexing country—after all, we are doing our best. You will soon feel that it is your race and your husband who is, who are, doing their best."

His tongue stumbled over the phrases that he had meditated so often and so eloquently. He felt sick and angry at having to use them. Love revenged itself on him for the indifferent treatment of years, and offered him this supreme moment wrapped in a kind of

revulsion. His face was pale, and his forehead moist with the necessity of what he had to say—the necessity of his whole declaration.

“Father too, I suppose,” said Joan deliberately.

Game thought a moment.

“There are many matters which I should be glad to discuss with your father with a more intimate right,” he said. “Joan, give me that right soon. Give it to me to-day. I need not ask you to think of him. But believe me, for him it is important.”

“No,” she said, “you need not ask me to think of him.”

She was silent for a moment. He, too, found more words difficult, and so they sat, with his importunity between them.

“I am trying to find some way of telling you,” she began at last, “how extraordinary and how impossible I think all that you have been saying. I don’t seem to find any way, so if I offend you I simply can’t help it. It is easy to say that I should never dream of marrying you—how could you suppose I would?—but there is something more.”

John picked up his hat.

“No,” he said hoarsely, “if that is true there is nothing more.”

He was on his feet, and she rose too.

“There is something more,” she repeated. “You seem to think that by marrying me”—her lip trembled and drew down—“you would obtain some sort of influence over me, and even over my father—that you would be able to dictate our private beliefs and our public actions. That may be a natural official expectation, but”—she rested a scornful gaze on him—“it is a very great mistake.”

"Good God!" said John Game again; and I do not know what else he could have said.

"There is even another thing," she went on, "that I think it is right you should know. You ask me to forget these unhappy Bengalis. I agree with you that they are unhappy, and I think you must know the reason; but I am not likely ever to forget them, for I am going to marry one of them."

Doubtless she thought that a little cruelty might set an official expectation in its proper light. He turned upon her the stern face of a man ten years older.

"You are going to marry a Bengali?" he said. "Which Bengali are you going to marry?"

"Mr. Bepin Behari Dey," she answered.

His mouth took the line with which it was accustomed to confront a new set of circumstances. He looked not so much aghast as alert and inflexible.

"No," he said, "you must not do that."

"Really?"

"I must speak to your father. It is impossible."

"By all means, if you like. Here he is," she told him, as Vulcan's tread sounded in the passage.

"Father," she went on in her excitement as he came in, "Mr. Game says I must not marry Bepin—it is impossible."

Vulcan nodded at Game as if he had not heard her, crossed the room and took his pipe from the mantelpiece. The two confronting each other waited for his reply; and in his own good time he gave it.

"I might ask what right you have to tell my daughter whom she must or must not marry," he said.

John laughed shortly.

"I have less right than most people, since I want

her to marry me," he said. "But you are her father—you have the right, I suppose."

Vulcan, pipe in hand, gave him a shaggy, surprised glance.

"You want to marry her yourself?" he enunciated.

"Well, what does she say to that?"

"What could I say, father?" demanded Joan.

Vulcan knocked the ashes out.

"That's for you to decide," he said, and looked furtively at Game.

Joan, clasping her hands, half turned away. This was not the indignation she expected. The paternal voice had even the note of parley in it.

"You are her father," repeated Game. "You can forbid this, I suppose."

Vulcan, with a troubled air, ascertained that the pipe was entirely empty.

"I don't know that I could, if I would," he said, "and I don't know that I would, if I could."

"Have you the least idea—the least idea—of what it involves?"

"Oh, I think so. It involves a considerable sacrifice, no doubt. But that she is ready to make, and so am I."

"A sacrifice indeed—and to what end? Do you think they will accept her—these people? Do you think they have ever accepted an Englishwoman who—You know, of course, that this man is already married?"

Vulcan hesitated, and glanced at his daughter, who passionately took the reply upon herself.

"Please make no insinuations, Mr. Game. We have been most fully and honourably informed. Mr. Dey was put through some form of marriage by his parents as a mere youth, to satisfy a social superstition which is fast disappearing. His so-called wife is still a child.

What does civilisation stand for, if we are to be influenced by such a circumstance as that!"

John turned impatiently to Mills.

"You may possibly not know that this early marriage is perfectly regular, that it makes every claim and establishes every right, and that it is recognised as valid and binding not only in Hindu law but by our own courts," he said peremptorily.

Vulcan, with an effort, began to pack his pipe.

"That doesn't affect the moral situation," he said.

"You will forgive me for speaking quite plainly," Game went on, taking a step toward Mills which was almost menacing. "I must ask you whether you are aware that your daughter could be placed in a zenana by this man and made to submit to all the domestic customs of orthodox Hindu society, a society which will have no love for her? That a Hindu husband could divorce her on the slightest pretext, but that she could never free herself from him? And that no British Court could give her relief from these conditions?"

"And we must ask you," Joan replied again proudly, "under what misapprehension you cross-examine us about our acquaintance with our own affairs?"

"If the man wants to marry you he's got the right, my girl," Vulcan checked her, and gave Game a glance in which there was a queer, shamefaced ray of encouragement. A suitor less shaken might have seized it.

"No," replied Game, "I am not the person to dissuade you. But I hope there are others. And I beg of you"—he turned to Vulcan—"at least to postpone this step. Insist that she shall take time to realise something of what she is doing. Find out for yourself. The thing is criminal."

"Oh, there's no hurry," said Mills; and as John walked out of the room, the Socialist leader succeeded, with fingers that trembled a little, in filling his pipe.

Game, on his part, drove straight back to Camac Street, where he found that Mrs. Foley had just gone to the usual afternoon party at the Victoria Club, given to establish happier relations between the conflicting races. He did not follow her there.

CHAPTER XXIV

AT the hour when all the world went about its affairs on that exquisite Monday morning toward the end of February, the curious might have seen, sitting beside Sir Kristodas Mukerji in his electric brougham, the spare figure with folded arms, in a yellow robe, of the Swami Yadava. The Judge, erect and austere, turned his eyes upon the broad familiar scenes of the Maidan; the priest, in his favourite attitude, seemed sunk in reverie. An old friend of his lordship, walking under the trees, saw the cameo face looking out, as it passed, and started at the resemblance to the Kristodas of other days.

The brougham, with its crimson judicial liveries outside and that dash of saffron in the corner, coursed steadily and quickly under the avenues and across the wide open spaces toward the High Court, in the city's far angle by the river. Now and then the broad dead leaf of a teak-tree cracked under the wheel, since it was spring in Calcutta, and everywhere the teak was putting on its divine young green, and dropping its worn-out bronze. The silk cottons were all out, glorious red of the branch against glorious blue of the sky; now and then the fragrance of the sissoo stole about like a spirit. The world was very busy; already the dust went curling in the roads where the ox-carts creaked to the jetties. Hurry and gaiety were in all the wide picture; the sun

was splendid ; the blare of a siren in the river almost said so. Kristodas looked out of one window and then out of the other. His lips made the motions of a little half-tender, recognisant smile. Then, unconsciously, he folded his arms like his *guru*, and thought.

It was a good hour before the Court would sit, but as they turned into Old Post Office Street it was plain that people were gathering and thickening there ; and presently Sir Kristodas saw beside his window the four legs of a horse and the long boots of a mounted policeman. The Swami's eye also rested on this ; they looked at one another and smiled.

"They are taking care of us," said the Judge.

"But there is no necessity," Yadava replied.

"Perhaps not. But times have changed. You will see. And I have just paid six thousand rupees for this thing," said Sir Kristodas apprehensively. "I hope they will let it alone."

In a moment, however, it became plain that the crowd was not waiting for the Judge. Way had to be made for him, and more policemen kept the people back from the arched entrance of the Court ; but the gathered faces wore no sign of unfriendliness as the brougham pushed through them and pulled up. They looked on silent and impassive, accepting the arrival as a mere preliminary.

The servant got down and opened the door, and the more honourable of the occupants descended first.

"It is Sri Yadava," said one of the students. The Swami glanced about him, and several of those standing nearest hastily made the *pranam*. Then came another reward to the curious, though perhaps most of the eyes that were looking on saw nothing strange. The Swami

Yadava, with a gentle look of inquiry at the Judge, humbly led the way through the outer precincts of His Majesty King Edward the Seventh's High Court of Judicature in Calcutta; and the Hon. Sir Kristodas Mukerji, K.C.I.E., with all the world's honours and dignities upon him, followed after—followed up the steps, and after.

Twenty minutes later another vehicle turned out of the Maidan into Old Post Office Street, the driver also wearing the distinctive uniform of an adjunct of the Courts. A movement went through the crowd as it was recognised, and the police had no trouble to make way for the van from the Alipore jail; the people fell back right and left, forcing a passage among themselves. They were curiously silent, too, watching it pass; and the only rush was when it stopped. Then they pressed forward eagerly, men and boys, still quiet but for excited talk among themselves, and as Ganendra descended from the van a hundred hands threw flowers at him from beyond the cordon of police—marigolds and frangipanni, the offerings of the temple. Some of them fell at the prisoner's feet, and a spray of jessamine clung to the helmet of the policeman who held open the door of the van. He detached it stolidly, and threw it on the ground. Ganendra stooped and picked it up; and there was an instant when he stood facing the crowd with tears in his eyes and the jessamine in his hand. A single voice cried, "*Ganendra ki-jai!*"* and at that the police hurried him in, out of their sight.

It was the first day of the trial of Ganendra Thakore. When Sir Kristodas entered the Sessions Court from the judge's corridor behind the Bench he faced a room packed with persons, many of whom had never been

* "Victory to Ganendra."

drawn or driven to a trial before. Three-quarters of the faces were European, indicating, perhaps, that the political idea in India was conspicuously recognised by the ruling race for the first time on this occasion. At least so it was said afterwards. The rest were Bengali, close pressed into the back seats and standing against the wall. The police had cleared the public corridors; gowned figures of barristers and vakils, hurrying from court to court, paused at the open door. Sir Kristodas gave the audience a judicial glance, detached and indifferent; it travelled till it rested on a yellow robe in a corner, and then withdrew, content.

It was at once noticed that the Advocate-General was not alone; there was a strong array of counsel for the Crown. Ganendra, on the other hand, was represented only by Ram Kissen Pal and a junior. On the level of the Judge sat Vulcan Mills—his position from first to last in the country. Joan was somewhere in the audience. There were several other ladies, in further testimony to the birth of the political idea, among them Mrs. Livingstone Hooper, who went home to lunch two hours later bitterly disappointed that the proceedings were not over and that Ganendra had not been sentenced to be hanged.

Very little indeed happened to reward sanguinary persons whose great-grand-uncles had been suffocated in the Black Hole, and who were attached to that tradition, like Mrs. Livingstone Hooper. There were technical points relative to the charges to be submitted to the Judge, the reading of the charges, the empanelling of the special jury, none of which formalities offered to the uninitiated any very vivid satisfaction. Once only did Mrs. Livingstone Hooper prick up her ears and congratulate herself that she had come.

"Prisoner at the bar," said the Officer of the Court, "are you guilty or not guilty?"

"That I uttered the words complained of I admit, but that they constitute any crime against the law of God or man I absolutely deny," replied Ganendra clearly.

His lordship turned to the officer. "That amounts to a plea of 'Not Guilty,'" he said; and Mrs. Hooper, assuming that she had heard the verdict, whispered indignantly to her companion, "I told you so!"

To some of the spectators, however, there was matter for comment even in the formal proceedings at which they assisted. They saw with surprise that while the Crown challenged jurymen freely, Ganendra's counsel objected only to one, a Mahomedan, who proved to be the owner of a slaughter-house in the suburbs. The cross-examination of the witnesses for the prosecution seemed intended rather to eliminate obvious exaggeration than to obscure or minimise the facts. Ram Kissen Pal, who had a reputation for handling evidence, wore a look of restraint, and followed the policemen, the newspaper reporters, and other witnesses as they stepped down, with hungry eyes.

"Ram Kissen is like a dog on a chain," said one of his admirers.

Ganendra himself sat for the most part attentive and silent. He wore his own semi-clerical clothes with a shawl twisted across his shoulders. Sometimes he buried his head in his hands to cough, and now and then he lifted to his face the spray of jessamine.

"It will be a walk-over," said a junior counsel to his leader as the prisoner disappeared through the trap-door of the dock, and the Court rose for the day.

CHAPTER XXV

TWO full days had passed in the hearing of evidence and the cross-examination of witnesses. Considering the strength of the case against Ganendra, the Crown called a surprising number of witnesses, and established, beyond all doubt, beside the holding of a public meeting in a proclaimed area, the delivery of a speech calculated to "excite hatred and disaffection" to His Majesty's Government, the shooting by some one in the crowd of a native policeman who was killed at once, and of a European sergeant who died in hospital shortly after, several minor cases of personal injury, and the usual damage done by a rioting mob. The charge was built up and buttressed beyond the ordinary. Over and over again the witnesses damned the prisoner ; and the acquiescence of Mr. Ram Kissen Pal, leading counsel for the defence, began to awake something like compassion in the Bar Library. Wherever the extenuating circumstances were to come from which the defence might be expected to produce, they were not to be twisted out of the evidence. So much was clear.

The trial had reached its fourth day. Every morning the prison van from Alipore had been accompanied by a thousand people, dissolving now and then under the pressure of the police, but too silent and orderly to need harsh handling. The throwing of a flower is

not penal anywhere ; and though it was discouraged as much as possible, there was always a point of the route at which the van received a garland or two, which turned it into something queerly resembling a hearse. When the prisoner had disappeared under the Gothic towers of the High Court, the people drifted into gatherings that formed and scattered and formed again, wandering through the city streets. Now and then a band would burst into song, or make a group, lying with their heads in each other's laps on the grass of the Maidan, to which one would utter mournful lines in recitative.

The general note was lamentation, the general sign bare feet ; flower-throwing was the only demonstration. Yet half the factories on the other side of the river were closed for lack of hands. When Beauchamp asked the mill-workers why they were out, they answered him civilly enough that the Sirkar was going to hang a *guru*, a very holy man. The students knew more about it ; but though its head was variously informed, the city had one heart.

Beauchamp had scorned the suggestion of troops from Barrackpore, but the Ainslies from the Fort were on duty in every congested part ; and the city force was increased from the districts. The provision seemed unnecessarily large. Hardly any cases of conflict with the police were reported ; the daily dockets were even smaller than usual. But Beauchamp, who was an experienced observer, sat in his saddle the greater part of each day, and considered the poppy-heads, how they had grown.

The Court on the fourth day was again crowded, as it had been since the beginning. More English faces were to be seen than at the opening of the trial. The

Swami Yadava sat patiently with folded arms in his own corner as he had sat every day. Among the Indian spectators clustered at the back, were representatives of many distinguished persons who had not thought well to come themselves—an intelligent clerk, for example, of the Rajah of Kolapatta.

As the afternoon wore on the Englishmen in the jury-box looked weary of a foregone conclusion; the Bengali jurors watched Ganendra and made notes of any point that told in his favour. Mr. Mills, in his honorary place upon the bench, nearly always made the same notes. The Judge, with an abstracted air and an active pen, seemed to have attention for Counsel only; but now and then his glance, passing over the spectators, rested just perceptibly upon the figure in the far corner, in a yellow robe.

The Advocate-General finished his speech for the prosecution. It was an address of great lucidity and force. It was also conspicuously marked by the absence of what might be called the moral passion of the law's defenders. It was as if the Officer of the Crown had in a manner pledged the honour of the Crown, and his own honour, to present the Crown's case upon the plain basis of the facts. It was so little more than a setting forth of the evidence that people yawned, in spite of its clearness and its weight. Until the close, when, in a few brief stern sentences, the Advocate-General drove the charges home to their logical conclusion, and asked the jurymen to do their simple duty to the State. Then the spectators ceased to yawn, and looked at those gentlemen.

Ram Kissen Pal rose and intimated, with evident regret, that he did not propose to address the jury. The Court then looked at Ganendra—everybody looked

at Ganendra. The Clerk of the Crown asked him a question ; and he said in reply, with disappointing brevity, that he did not wish, at that stage of the case, to make any statement.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and the reporters waited confidently for the Court to rise. But the Court did not rise. Sir Kristodas, although it was five o'clock, proceeded to charge the jury. The charge was brief, dry, and colourless.

"You have heard the evidence, and you have doubtless perceived that the case for the prosecution has not been impeached in any way," he told them. It was clear that he had only one expectation.

"You must not flinch from your duty," was the injunction with which they retired.

They took an hour to deliberate—curiously long. Sir Kristodas busied himself with papers and references. Ram Kissen Pal had a reservation to ask for, and was refused with a touch of irritation. His Lordship, as a watching junior remarked, brushed that able barrister away "like a fly." His glance no longer sought the figure in the corner, which nevertheless sat contented and very still.

The Judge began to look toward the door from which the jury would issue. The court-room grew stuffy with the afternoon sun ; a few of the spectators thought they could wait for the verdict till the morning papers brought it, and slipped away ; but others took their places, and the court-room remained as full as before, full of people, full of uncertainty, and very full of scrutiny of the old man on the Bench.

It was striking six when the jury returned. The foreman, with a face upon which wonder still sat, reported that they were not unanimous. Two, it appeared,

in face of the law, the pleading, and the facts, were for a verdict of "Not Guilty." Sir Kristodas cast a divining glance towards the jury-box, in which the two may have recognised a ray of approval. However, there was the verdict of the majority—"Guilty."

"I accept the verdict of the majority," said His Lordship. His voice had an odd harsh crack in it and he pulled his robes nervously about him as he spoke. A murmur of relief stirred in the Court. So much then, was settled. Vulcan Mills folded his arms with a dramatic gesture, and the Clerk of the Crown recited to the prisoner that he had been found guilty on the detailed charge.

"Have you anything to say why judgment should not be passed on you according to law?" said he.

There was a movement in the back of the room, a craning forward, a struggling for place. An usher cried "Order!" Ganendra had risen to make his own statement, and almost instantly there was order, so that a sparrow, twittering in the high pointed window above his head, was heard as plainly as he.

"My Lord Judge," he said slowly, "I, Ganendra Thakore, accused in this case, have no wish to defend myself from the charges brought against me, in the ordinary sense of the term. The charges as they stand must remain, and I may venture to hope will ever remain, associated with my name."

Sir Kristodas looked up sharply; but there was in the prisoner's bearing no arrogance. His head was bent, his hands clasped behind his back. One would have said, a man realising himself at the most serious moment of his life. The Judge uttered no rebuke.

"Personally I would prefer that this case should go down to history undefended, either by me or by any

one on my behalf. But there are other considerations, and therefore I speak, not for myself, but for my offence.

"I am not a lawyer, and I have small experience of Courts of Justice. I do not know how far I will be heard in urging the moral sanction, the moral justification, of the offence I have committed, and how far I must plead extenuation only."

"You had better confine yourself to extenuating circumstances," said the Judge.

Ganendra lifted his head.

"Then, my Lord," he said in a stronger voice, with careful self-control, "I shall hope to show extenuation so great, palliation so wide, that it will reach beyond this Court to the legislators of this country. So it may be that my offence, having been committed, shall disappear ; and if such result comes of it I shall think myself happy, my Lord Judge.

"I am accused of exciting to hatred and disaffection ; but I submit that these harsh words do not truly describe the new emotion which is beginning to thrill the hearts of my countrymen. A new emotion they have, and through it they are finding a kind of life for their souls. It may be a feverish life. I do not ask you to believe that it is yet very sane or well regulated. But I do ask a hearing when I maintain that it is the only one they have ; and that before they found it they were dead. I know that before I found it I was dead. I ate and drank complacently, in agreement with the world as it had produced me ; but I did not know my own spirit. In my fortieth year came the misfortune which awakened me, my Lord, to what your law calls hatred and disaffection ; and while I cannot even yet bless that misfortune, there is no moment of the life

of the soul into which it ushered me that I would exchange for all the forty dead years that went before."

"I would submit, my Lord, that biographical detail on the part of the prisoner is irrelevant," said the Advocate-General.

Ganendra looked at the Judge in submissive silence. Sir Kristodas opened his mouth and closed it again, with a nod that at once acknowledged and passed over the objection. The defendant continued—

"My Lord Judge, I was raised from the dead. Is it a thing incredible to your Lordship? I stand before you not in my corruptible body, but in my incorruptible body. I, who am permitted by the clemency of this Court to address you, have consciously and gloriously partaken of the Divine essence. I have spoken with the Lord of the Herds, and in part—in part—the vision of Arjuna has been mine."

In his far corner the Swami Yadava lifted a hand of involuntary protest. The Advocate-General crossed his legs and smiled, Ram Kissen gave a little cough that uttered a hundred reminders; but the Judge on the bench leaned nearer.

"I came into this estate by the way of what your law calls hatred and disaffection. Not hatred of any person or disaffection to any potentate, but hatred and disaffection toward the political conditions which were numbing the manhood, and silencing the voice, and destroying the traditions of my own great and ancient people. I placed this estate against the fat prosperity of a few rich men, against the disturbing of our immemorial peace with a few more railroads, against all the other economic blessings which we are so often bidden to count. I placed against it the Pax Britannica. And I chose the word of the Lord."

At this Ganendra looked for the first time full at Sir Kristodas, searching his face for an instant, as if demanding response, and a certain response there was. A kind of light went out in the Judge's face. Then he went on—

“Having found my own soul I looked, my Lord, with the eyes of my soul, for the soul of the Mother. I saw it dumb and dying in the souls of her sons. The Troubler of Men spoke to me and gave me a message. Then I saw and knew why my own soul had been shown to me ; and from that moment to this I have never ceased to deliver the message—this message. The men of my race must come out of political bondage ; they must tear themselves at any sacrifice from ignoble dependence upon an alien power, from the poor comfort and security that we are asked to value above our birthright—in order that they may enter into the first condition under which they can realise and proclaim to the world the Divinity that from the beginning has loved this land above all others.”

Ganendra's voice trembled with physical weakness, which he closed his lips in an obvious effort to repress. He was so moved that even the Advocate-General listened with consideration—so moved that he was allowed to go on, as otherwise he might not have been.

“I say the first of the conditions. For God is *mukta*—free. He is *buddha*—enlightened. He is *suddha*—pure. Those who would be clothed with His mission must be all three, but freedom comes first. And India claims His mission to the world—India, whose God is older than light or thought, whose inspiration gave the West a religion which it dares to retail to us at second-hand. India is the *guru* of the nations. Let others invent their luxuries, build their ships, forge

their great instruments of war. The mission of India is to proclaim and to prove the union of God and man, the supreme, universal, and eternal necessity of knowledge. India holds the torch of the spirit, and would hold it high. This is the mission of Nationalism, mis-called hatred and disaffection, for the sake of which I am accused before you to-day.

"Hatred and disaffection? Not to any person or to any potentate. Were Bhishma and Drona, men meet for honour, my Lord, fought with disaffection on the field of the Kurus? Had the blind King hate from Pritha's son? Was not the fight made at the bidding of a voice which said, 'If thou wilt not wage this lawful battle, then wilt thou fail in thine own Law and thine honour'? And was that voice other than the voice which the Nationalists of this country hear to-day?"

Sir Kristodas, listening, sat forward, with his elbow on the desk, his hand now shading his eyes. The spectators listened too, a little perhaps, as if to a poet or a performance, but closely, intently. The tension plainly relaxed when, as if he had been in danger of forgetting it, Ganendra turned to the point involved, but not insisted on by the Crown, of holding a political meeting in a proclaimed area, and dealt with it on a different plane, in commonplaces of invective, arraigning the authorities for subverting the spirit of British institutions like any demagogue. Vulcan Mills took copious notes. The prisoner then told Judge and jury that he asked no grace and expected none, that he was prepared to take the consequences of his acts, and proposed to make no appeal from the decision of the Court; at which point the tears of Bepin Behari Dey, who was sitting with his fiancée in the second row, fell like rain.

"I believe," summed up Ganendra, "that the law takes cognisance of what it describes as good and bad intention. I do not hope to establish my intention in the eye of the law; but I know—I *know*—that I have established it in the eye of God."

There was a breaking note in this, a high sharp quaver, which suggested that the man had reached the end of his resources. Though no sound was heard, the silence of the court-room was full of sympathy. But it was too soon for that. The prisoner stood for an instant with his eyes roving, his face working, all his self-control ebbing with that last word, and the knowledge that it was to be his last. Suddenly turning from Judge and jury, he wheeled round to the court-room, packed with intent English faces.

"Associate yourselves, O ye people," he cried wildly, and so fast that he was barely understood, "and ye shall be broken in pieces! And give ear, ye of far countries, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces—gird yourselves, and—"

"Enough! Silence! No more!" commanded the Judge hurriedly, and the passionate invocation ceased; but the prisoner staggered as he stepped down, and but for the arm of a Sergeant of Police would have fallen. The policeman looked oddly touched and impressed. There was a movement in the Court, an undertone of comment, but not a ripple of demonstration. The Indians were too full of emotion to make any sign. The English listened to the voice of prophecy, and thought that the prophet looked very ill. One person, an elderly Eurasian, got up and left the Court.

Whereupon the Hon. Sir Kristodas Mukerji passed sentence.

"Ganendra Thakore," he said, "you have been found

guilty of attempting to excite feelings of hatred and disaffection to the British Government established by law.

"I agree with that verdict.

"I have now to consider what sentence I shall pass on you. If the speech which you delivered had stood alone I might have taken a more lenient view of your offence, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the immediate result of the wicked words you addressed to an excited crowd was a riot which resulted in the immediate murder of one fellow-being, and the infliction of fatal injury upon another.

"I do not say that I have listened unmoved to the appeal which you have made to sentiments which Indians have ever been taught to revere, or that if I heard it as a Pope of the Hindu religion instead of as a Judge in a Court of Criminal Law, I might not permit myself to be to some extent influenced by it. But I have to remember that in the eyes of the Government which rules, and for many years must continue to rule this land, whose high and undeniable justice I am here to affirm, a great part of what you have been allowed to say must appear a farrago of mischievous nonsense. It may be that it would be wiser for them, and better for us, if they would try to understand our people more by the light of those old books from which you have quoted; but this is not the place, nor am I the person, to speculate upon that. The fact remains, and you have made it abundantly clear to me this afternoon, that religious emotion, however pure, can furnish no sound basis for political life. These things stand aside one from the other; and from the bottom of my heart I adjure you, and all others like you, who believe that they need only fan a desire to turn it into fact, to understand and believe that this is not possible, and

to turn their souls from crime in whatever disguise it may present itself.

"The extenuations you have urged have no place in a secular Court, and, holding as I do His Majesty's Commission to try and to punish offences against law and order, I cannot admit any validity in them.

"In the eye of the law your appeal simply constitutes you a menace to society. Over and above the offences proved against you, by your own statement you have for years steadily instilled political poison into the minds of the youth of this province. You have held out the arm of the priest to point the way to violence and crime. That this has been a source of true spiritual satisfaction to you many will doubt, and that such spiritual satisfaction should make a feather's-weight against the gravity of your misdeeds all will deny.

"I feel much sorrow in sentencing you ; but I do not think that I can pass, consistently with my duty, with the ends of justice, and with the offence of which you have been found guilty, a lighter sentence than the one which I am going to give you.

"The least sentence which I can pass upon you is that of ten years' transportation ; and I sincerely trust that should you live to return to your native country you will find a happier sphere for your activities in her service."

The old man gave Ganendra a direct and courageous look as he finished, which the other returned with the eye of compassion. He also said a word of reply, speaking rather low, and in Bengali. The reporters, who did not catch it, said that he muttered defiance. But it was not defiance.

"My Lord Judge," retorted this prisoner of the twentieth century, "I know that thou believest."

CHAPTER XXVI

“OF course, Michael, *of course* I’ll do it, but for goodness’ sake tell me—*what* am I to say! And do be quick, it’s nearly twelve o’clock now! Where they are all to get their dinners, I can’t imagine.”

“Surely there must be some sort of form for putting people off. Can’t you think of anything?”

“You’re not ill—you’ve been to Court; and I’m not ill—I’ve been riding!” Mrs. Foley wrung her hands. “And I can’t say I’ve had bad news. And I have the Maybirds coming and the Adjutant-General, *and* the Livingstone Hoopers. It’s all very well for you! You haven’t got to deprive Mrs. Livingstone Hooper of a *burra-khana* at eight hours’ notice!”

“Just say,” Foley told her, “that you are unexpectedly obliged to look after a friend in trouble this evening. I’ll have to go, not you, but it’s the same thing. Miss Mills will come here to you, I imagine, if she’ll go anywhere. It’s a preposterous nuisance; but old John made such a point of it. And now I must get back to Court.”

“Of course!” said Lucy again, the indignation in her voice struggling with the dismay in her eyes. “Now that I know what to say— But how exciting, and unexpected, and horrid!”

As her husband left the room she sat down in her amazement, wrote eight notes in rapid duplicate

postponing her dinner-party, and peremptorily sent for the cook, while Michael, having given John Game's urgent message, returned to the labours of the law.

It was the day after the close of the trial. The result ran by word of mouth through the night, but in the morning all the world knew. Part of the world ate its breakfast bacon with indifference, another part shut up its shops and fasted, blew conch shells and festooned the street in black. Ganendra's portrait hung suspended across Dhurrumtollah draped in crape, and cheap photographs of him, verses about him, and sketches of his life, sold to the roaming crowds like sweetmeats at a fair. Two of the mills across the river were shut, the jute presses were deserted ; there was a sympathetic strike of dock labourers. The temper of the people had changed. Ugly rushes by mill-hands on European assistants had produced some shooting in return ; one or two natives had been killed. The stone-throwing was heavy, constant, and irrepressible ; the police were attacked everywhere—from upper windows and the roofs of houses. By eleven in the morning the mission church of St. Matthew in the bazar was discovered to be burning ; by noon the regular troops had twice dispersed a mob, and the Calcutta Light Horse, to the intense joy of that body, had been turned out for duty. The big pillared houses of the English quarter stood serene ; even the thoroughfares of European shops were hardly aware of disturbance ; but in the packed bazars, the native squares and students' quarters the pot was boiling hard. Beauchamp, who, between the Viceroy, the Home Office, and the demands of his own department, had never had such a day in his life, was not at all sure that it would not boil over.

One would have thought it the last straw to the

camel's back presented by the harried Beauchamp when, early in the morning, posters appeared on every blank wall and hoarding in the students' quarters—

VULCAN MILLS SPEAKS TO-NIGHT,

with the place and the hour. The Commissioner of Police saw them as he drove to his headquarters in Lal Bazar, and at once communicated with the Home Department, perhaps to say that his back was breaking. But nobody interfered with the posters. All day long they made their announcement. The police were no doubt too busy keeping order to remove them. No intimation was served upon Mr. Mills or upon persons responsible for the use of the Hall of Progress. When Bepin arrived there at six to make final platform arrangements, he found the doors open, the hall half full already, and none to dispute his admission. He placed his lamp and glass of water and returned with the confident report, "The authorities are nonplussed."

They dined together early, he and Joan and Vulcan, and entered upon their memorable enterprise in a hired carriage which drove away from the Grand Hotel toward College Street at exactly seven o'clock. A moment later a motor of comfortable size, moving at a rate rather in excess of regulations, approached the hotel; and a smart-looking brougham turned out of the twilight obscurity of some trees opposite, and drew in behind it. As the motor stopped a European, lounging about the entrance, went up to it and said a word to some one inside, at which it moved off again more slowly, also towards College Street.

The driver of the gharry, humped on the box, lashed his horses, and they went at a good pace along the tram-lines. One of the occupants of the following

motor spoke with feeling of his tyres. The brougham kept steadily behind the motor.

"Sir," said Bepin from the gharry's opposite seat, with his ardent eyes upon Mills, "on this night you become a saint and hero in Bengal for ever."

Vulcan took off his hat and let the south wind play among his grizzled locks.

"I'd like well to be remembered here," he said.

"You will make their Gagging Act a dead letter," said Bepin humbly. "They will never dare to enforce it again."

"That I think we may hope," replied Vulcan.

"It's a great speech, father," Joan told him, holding it up. "It will go round the world."

"Best give me the slip with the headings," said her father; but she answered no, it was safer with her till he wanted it; and Bepin smiled understandingly.

"It is your privilege to carry it," he said, as if they assisted in some high ceremonial.

They went more slowly through the narrow streets where the shop-fronts flared with floating oil-wicks, and every one shouted to clear his own way; but the motor behind, and the carriage behind that, seemed content with the pace. The motor did not even sound its own impatient horn until the Hall of Progress, with every window lighted, came into view, and the gharry driver, with the raised arm of menace, turned his beasts from the middle of the road in triumphant approach. Then the motor slid swiftly in front, and was standing beside the banquette when the door of the gharry opened and Bepin sprang out.

It was plain that the hall was full to overflowing, but no crowd had been permitted to collect about the entrance or in the road. A couple of mounted policemen,

moving in and out of the light of the street lamps, had secured that. The arrangement was obvious and ordinary enough, and looked, moreover, as if the meeting was to be permitted. Joan Mills, as Bepin helped her out, felt reassured by it. Two or three Bengali gentlemen were in waiting, and came profusely down the steps to meet them. Joan and Bepin went on up with one of these. The others attended Vulcan while he paid the fare.

For an instant, however, with instinctive courtesy, the Bengalis stepped back to allow a gentleman in evening dress, who had evidently arrived in a motor, to speak first to Mr. Mills. There were two, in fact, who approached him, but the other was in ordinary clothes and carried a light overcoat. A third stood near the motor; but nobody would take account of his clothes; he was not a person of pretension.

The arrival in evening dress spoke to Mr. Mills, indicating something—a paper—which he had in his hand; and Mr. Mills retreated a step and looked round. The Bengali gentlemen simultaneously retreated a step, and looked round. One of them hoped to the other that “nothing untoward” would occur. Mr. Mills appeared to ask a question, and then to reflect. He thrust his hands in his pockets in a disordered way, and looked up the steps at the lighted building. By that time the Bengali gentlemen were halfway up, and the person whose clothes were of no pretension had turned into two, and occupied the immediate foreground.

“You had better come quietly,” said Beauchamp.

“But my daughter. I demand to communicate with my daughter,” said Vulcan.

“You will be given that opportunity presently,”

Beauchamp informed him. "A carriage is waiting for Miss Mills; and she will be told immediately. Now—if you don't mind—"

Whereupon the Bengali gentlemen, watching from the top step, saw an inexplicable sight. Vulcan went quietly. He was very deeply astonished, but the law-abiding instincts he had devoted so many years to denying did not fail him when he needed them, and he went quietly.

"I suppose you'll be able to explain this more fully," he said, as he stepped into the motor, followed by Beauchamp, and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, and the two persons whose clothes were of no pretension. Vulcan tripped as he entered, over a portmanteau bearing the initials of the Deputy Superintendent.

"As fully as ever you like," said Beauchamp cheerfully. "Bit of a squash, I'm afraid. Sorry, but it couldn't be helped."

The motor sped away to the south, toward the Strand Road that lies along the river, and the Bengali gentlemen looked at one another with concern. As the motor moved off the brougham came closer, and Michael Foley got out of it and ran up the steps.

"Can you tell us, if you please, sir, what has happened?" asked one of the Bengalis as he passed.

"Mr. Mills has been called away on important business," replied Foley. "I think he will not be able to speak to-night. Who is in charge of the meeting?"

"Sir, there is no chairman—exactly. It was thought better to keep the proceedings entirely informal."

"Quite so. Well, one of you had better go in and dismiss it," Foley said; and they all turned to the tramp behind them of a couple of dozen city police in charge of a European Inspector.

Foley said a word to the Inspector.

"Just a moment," he added, and went into the hall. The police stood to attention and waited ; the Bengali gentlemen got into Vulcan's gharry, which had providentially not gone, and drove off, presumably to look for him. From the hall came the sound of clapping.

Michael had to make his way with some determination to the front. The place was packed from door to door. Rows upon rows of sleek Bengali heads, with here and there a turban, proclaimed an audience of youths. The boys stood thick in the aisles, sat almost on one another's knees. They looked with surprise at Foley as he pushed through—he was the only Englishman in the building—but they crowded together to let him pass. On the platform sat Joan and Bepin alone, with an empty chair, a small table, a lamp, and a glass of water. Joan, with her father's notes in her hand, looked pleased and expectant. She leaned forward and spoke to Bepin, who replied with a smile.

Suddenly her eye caught the figure of Foley advancing ; she spoke again to Bepin, and the two watched him till he arrived upon the platform. From the back of the audience some one who recognised the Standing Counsel hissed ; but the audience as a whole was silent with curiosity, and made no demonstration but that of their eager eyes.

Foley spoke to Joan, and Bepin listened. Michael's manner was plainly that of great consideration, and he answered her rapid questions with obvious reluctance. He was indicating a course to her, persuading her, explaining to her. He made a sign with his head to the entrance, beyond which the police were waiting her departure to break up the meeting. He did not speak to Bepin.

Joan questioned and heard him, with eyes that grew ever larger and a face that grew ever whiter. In his anxiety to get her away he made a gesture ever so little peremptory. At that she hesitated, looked about her at the sea of faces, and sprang to her feet.

"Gentlemen!" she cried, "My father has been prevented from speaking to you to-night—I do not know by what means. But I have his speech in my hands and you shall hear it!" A roar of applause silenced her for an instant, but it quickly died away. Foley, with a look of irritation and despair, fell back a step, and stood watching the door. Bepin also rose and took a place behind her with folded arms.

"Men of Bengal!" she cried, "Men of Bengal!" and lost the place. With shaking fingers she found the page; unsteadily, almost hysterically, she began to read. The Bengalis watched her raptly; she could have walked, at that moment, over their bodies to the door. The words were pungent and potent enough; but it was the woman, the goddess, standing there for their sakes, that every one of them worshipped, so that the words fell almost harmless.

And not many of them fell at all. Her voice could hardly have penetrated beyond the hall when immediately at the open door showed a score of white uniforms and red turbans, and through the room sounded the more peremptory voice of the Inspector in charge, informing the meeting that it was ordered to disperse. The idyll finished in a crash. Half the audience showed panic, the other half refused to move. The girl's voice was drowned in shouts, in the uproar of protest and struggle and confusion, the scraping and breaking of chairs, the sudden crush and swaying everywhere, but most at the door, and sharp

against it all, once, twice, and again, the report of a revolver.

Foley put his hand upon her arm—he could barely make himself heard—and pointed to the chair behind her.

“It will be over in a few minutes,” he shouted, “but we must see it through now.”

And sitting there they did see it through. The attention of the audience was fortunately almost wholly taken up with the police. Only one old shoe, aimed at Foley, fell at Bepin’s feet, who kicked it angrily aside.

There they sat till the hall was gradually cleared, and outside the sounds of confusion came from further and further down the street. Then they left the platform, Bepin gravely offering Joan his arm, and in that procession reached the Foleys’ brougham.

“Can I give you a lift?” asked Michael of the young Bengali; but Bepin, with an embarrassed glance at Joan, refused this politeness. He stood for a long time there on the edge of the banquette, staring into the darkness, and thinking of a letter which had been shown him that morning from Poona. The street lamps watched him in the gathering silence and the south wind blew up from the sea about the solitary figure. Standing there he seemed to represent in his single person the whole fiasco of the speech that failed. Even then, perhaps, Fate put her fool’s-cap on him, hiding the shape with laurels.

And two miles down the river the Royal Indian Marine Transport *Lansdowne* lay in mid-stream with a tide that served lapping against her iron sides, and whistled a hint to Beauchamp, who stood on deck, exchanging a last word with the Deputy Commissioner.

“I ought to be back in Bombay by the 15th,” said

that gentleman. "She does the run across in four days."

"Take your time," Beauchamp told him. "The sea will do you good. There's no such blooming hurry. Did you get hold of some linen?"

"Half a dozen soft shirts," said the Deputy Commissioner. "There wasn't time——"

"I fancy he'll worry through with that," said the senior officer, with a twinkle.

A grizzled head appeared at the door of the companion, and Beauchamp hastily shook his Deputy's hand.

"Good-bye, old man. Oh—your daughter shall have your letter to-night, Mr. Mills," he said to Vulcan, who approached them.

Mills made no reply, but came nearer, his eyes shining under his shaggy hair. He came nearer still, with conscious deliberate steps, and held out his hand to the Commissioner of Police.

"Good-bye to you," he said, "and you'll understand that I've no complaint to make against you personally. You're but the agent of a blind despotism and an infamous law."

"Oh, that's all right. Good-bye. Bon voyage!"

The launch received the Commissioner out of their sight, and snorted away with him. The Deputy Commissioner, leaving Mr. Mills absorbed in the moving lights of Garden Reach, retired to his cabin. There he took further precautions as to a document which ran as follows:—

"To the General Commanding and Resident at Aden.

"Whereas the Governor-General in Council, for good and sufficient reasons, has seen fit to determine that Vulcan Mills"—with description—"shall be placed

under personal restraint at Aden, you are hereby required and commanded, in pursuance of that determination, to receive the person above named into your custody, and to deal with him in conformity with the orders of the Governor-General in Council, and the provisions of Regulation III of 1818.

“By order of the Governor-General in Council.

“John Game, Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department.”

And the date.

Having secured this document in his despatch-box, and placed the despatch-box under his berth, the Deputy Commissioner lighted a cigar, and went above, as eight bells had just sounded, to ascertain the hours and regulations on board an Indian Marine Transport with regard to meals.

Nor was Beauchamp late for dinner at Government House. He bragged of that a little later, as was natural. His Excellency, when they shook hands, made no sign, not so much as an interrogative eyebrow; but Mr. Stevenson Spence was not quite up to that form. As they sat down to their soup the Private Secretary leaned a little forward and looked at Beauchamp across the lady who separated them.

“Got him?” he asked, with just a point of anxiety.

“Got him,” replied Beauchamp, with joyous calm.

CHAPTER XXVII

LUCY FOLEY, after all, need not have put off the Adjutant-General and the Maybirds, need have run no risk in connection with Mrs. Livingstone Hooper. Michael, in the drive from the Hall of Progress to the Grand Hotel, pointed out quite vainly to Joan the necessity of returning with him to Camac Street. She put the proposal aside as hardly to be considered, and spent herself in breathless, insistent questions about her father. Foley could tell her only that he had been arrested. Game had told him no more; in such bonds of silence was the Home Secretary himself to Beauchamp for the complete success of the operation; and Michael found it a little difficult, as they bumped over the tram-lines, to disassociate the husband of Joan's friend and the legal supporter of the Government which had done this deed. She certainly made him face with her the interior conditions of the Calcutta jail very much in the capacity of Standing Counsel; she gave him the full benefit of his complicity in the political order which had, presumably, put her father there. And when he again ventured to urge upon her the hospitality of his roof, she turned upon him with an eye that flashed and a lip that trembled.

"I don't know how you think I *could*!" she said.

Foley was obliged to drop her at the hotel, with the promise that Lucy would be with her early next morning, which she received with rather perfunctory

gratitude. Lucy must not, in any case, come that night. He left her, at her urgent request, to reflect upon the situation alone.

"I am not in the least alarmed," she told him, with a touch of bravado which was perhaps excusable, "I am not made of sugar and water"—a statement with which, as he drove back to Lucy, he had no difficulty in concurring.

Later in the evening Bepin came, without further light. He had applied for news at police headquarters with a diffidence which was perhaps not unnatural, and been repulsed with a brevity which was perhaps not unnatural either. He had wandered about the streets resourcelessly a little, and had bethought him of one friend who might know something, Mr. de Silva, reporter on the *Calcutta Freeman*, but Mr. de Silva knew nothing either—until about an hour afterwards, when he stumbled, to his own renown, upon the truth. In the few minutes which Bepin had with Joan before they separated he could only look darkly and miserably about him, and say—

"They have dared to imprison our hero. But they will be punished. Soon they will be punished."

John Game, believing Joan to be with the Foleys, took no further measures on her behalf. He sat in his room at the club, hoping in vain for a note or a telephone message upon which he might go to her. Without a summons he felt, blankly enough, that he might not go. His own official arm had paralysed him. He could not step across the signature of the warrant of commitment under which Vulcan Mills was gliding every moment further and further down the Hooghly, very much against his will.

And by an oversight Vulcan's letter to his daughter

lay all night in the hotel office. It went up to her next morning, but not before the newspapers. They found her waiting from the dawn, and it was from the headlines of the fortunate *Freeman*—the other papers published only the arrest—that Joan learned of the summary measure, taken for the “security of British dominions from foreign hostility and from internal commotion,” which had so abruptly and forcibly separated her from her parent.

“ARREST
AND
DEPORTATION OF VULCAN MILLS.”

It had a breathless look ; as a matter of fact it had come in very late.

Vulcan's daughter gave one incredulous start, then sat cold and quiet.

“So,” she said aloud. “That! I never thought of that. But how dared they? Can they possibly have done it on their own responsibility? And if they got leave—what does it mean?”

I cannot say whether, so soon, she divined what it meant.

A telegram addressed to Vulcan was handed to her with the paper, a yellow, foreign telegram. When, in the course of time, she opened this, she may have been struck with a certain irony in the coincidence. It was from the editor of the *London Daily*, that most enterprising and unprejudiced of the halfpenny sheets, and it read—

“Please wire five hundred words your view sentence Ganendra Thakore.”

The English mail letters were there too, and among them a bundle of clippings—he had ceased to write—

from Hammond. She glanced through them ; they were entirely concerned with the doings of Howard Innes and Philip Dream. One of them discussed at length the respective chances and qualifications of the two men for the leadership of the State Socialist Party, as if, in view of a situation turning rapidly from the ideal to the actual, that old giant, Vulcan Mills, were no longer to be reckoned with. "The Apostles of Compromise" was the heading of the article, and Joan saw, with irritation, that it was cut from the *London Daily*.

She took up the Calcutta paper again to scan the brief announcement, "as we go to press," that was humming round the world as she looked ; and her glance went from that to the column of Reuter's cables. She read them, perceiving nothing, until her travelling eye stopped at the capital letters of a familiar designation. The London telegram was dated the day before, and it ran—

"At to-day's meeting of the delegates of the State Socialist Party at present in session at Swindon, a resolution was carried to the effect that the party repudiates the policy followed by Mr. Vulcan Mills now and lately in the course of his tour in India, and gravely deprecates both the continuance and the consequences of that policy."

"And it will be nearly three weeks," she groaned aloud, "before father can know anything about that!"

Her single thought, I fear, had been for her father since the first blow fell. She had remembered no other claim. Lucy, arriving all compassion, found her breakfast-tray littered with steamship and railway guides, her trunks half packed already. They talked together as women do in misfortune, thinking of the misfortune

only. Lucy was not incriminated. She confessed to Michael afterwards that it had been the first time, inexplicable as it seemed, when she seemed to regain the Joan of other days.

"So you see," Lucy was saying, "there is nothing to be gained by leaving before the twelfth. The *Mongolia* will arrive only a day or two, at latest, after the *Lansdowne* gets in; and she is the first ship by which Mr. Mills could possibly get away, even if—And Aden is a desperate place to wait in. I remember the experience of the Willy Walkers, when he was put off there with small-pox. You had much better make up your mind to come to us. You can be as quiet as ever you like—"

She stopped at the sudden change of expression with which Joan was looking at the door, turned, and saw Bepin Behari Dey standing there. His eyes were large and bright, his face was drawn to the point of emaciation. He stood hesitating, with one thin brown hand clutching the lapel of his coat, until Joan, with an effort of reassurance in her voice, cried—

"Why, come in, Bepin."

His arrival made an instant, curious difference. He came in, and brought with him everything he stood for; Joan's face wore the sudden shadow of forgotten considerations. They were in her voice when she said to Mrs. Foley—

"Thank you very much, Lucy. It is most kind, I will—let you know."

Lucy rose reluctantly; but she knew that she could not press the point. Forgotten considerations sat there, with a thin brown hand still clutching a black lapel. She felt that Joan was bracing herself to her allegiance—and when Joan did that—

Later in the day Joan wrote to her, and the note bore an address in a suburb much affected by well-to-do Bengali families. She begged her friend's forgiveness very humbly. She had decided to take Lucy's advice about remaining in Calcutta for the present; but—she had gone to the Roys. They had claimed her promise, and Bepin thought it best. Upon thinking everything carefully over she had decided that her father would not wish her to make any change in her immediate plans. Bepin had also claimed her promise, and it was likely that they would be married within a few days. Meanwhile, she was happier with the Roy ladies than she could be anywhere else—Lucy would understand that. Lucy certainly did not understand it, nor was she at all disposed to sit tamely down under it. She had an inspiration.

"Couldn't John deport *her*?" she demanded of her husband.

To which Michael replied with the emphasis of conviction, "No such luck!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE *Calcutta Freeman* remarked that the result of the deportation of Vulcan Mills upon Calcutta justified everybody concerned. A wandering correspondent—one of those who periodically take soundings of empire for the great organs—wrote to his paper that it was enlightening. It was markedly the effect of a sudden douche of cold water, much rather than anything more damaging or more heroic. Machine guns would have been far less effective in allaying the popular fever, which yielded to “constitutional” treatment, as Sir Robert Farquhar observed, wonderfully. The Member of Parliament, that real sovereign, the party leader, before whom Cabinets trembled, who only yesterday was arranging for the overthrow of a usurping bureaucracy and the return of the people, had disappeared at a sign.

“Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever,”

quoted the *Commentator* plaintively. “We can only mourn him.” That was the embarrassing fact; they could only mourn him. If he had conceivably been executed they could have done more for him. The rope, in inch parcels, would have had a commercial value as a charm; the ashes, if he had been reduced to them, might

have been cherished in the zenanas at five rupees an ounce ; his effigy, if his person had not been available, might have been burned in sandalwood and fine butter with *pompes funèbres*. But it is impossible to demonstrate over a hero who has gone comfortably to sea at the State's expense. They could only mourn him, in long, astonished articles that read like political obituaries, and had a queer note of grievance against the Government at home.

"They have failed us, the English people have failed us," said the *Bengal Free Press*, "in our hour of need." Their disappointment was such as almost to justify Sir Robert's observation to the Viceroy.

"They expect us to run their revolution for them, like everything else," said he, with the legitimate grumble of an overworked man.

But the mill-hands went back to the mills, the students to their quarters, the troops to the Fort. Even the news that Ganendra Thakore had been refused permission to appeal, and had been sent temporarily to an up-country prison, for reasons of health, was calmly received. Ganendra had lifted the public heart very high, but now, who could deny that he had entered on the fate that was written upon his forehead from the beginning ?

There was also some astonishment in Britain ; but as it subsided very little criticism of Lord Campden's action appeared. The *Cry* and the *Call* called and cried, but they were as voices in the wilderness. The great organs swelled in a chorus of approval ; there was a halfpenny hurrah ; the *London Daily* and a European potentate sent telegrams of congratulation to His Excellency.

"They are taking up a very *stiff* line," said Jotindra

Babu, who was now ranged inflexibly for law and order. "And quite high time at that. There has been enough altogether of this foolish policy of *conciliation*."

Parliament was on the verge of dissolution. There was hubbub enough in the Lobby, but no time for notice of a question. Sir Philip Marcus wrote a letter to the *Times* prefiguring the last days of the British Empire, the General Committee of the State Socialist Party, and one or two particular ones, met in urgent council, the Under-Secretary for India lapsed often into a contented smile. And in a few days the writs were out, while Vulcan was still feeling the swell of the south-east monsoon.

The *Lansdowne* saw no necessity to make port at Colombo; she steamed round Ceylon with the air of being superior to politics, no doubt feeling that she had a cargo of them. So Mr. Mills had to do without the news and the opportunity of cabling to England. He had a good deal of criticism for the transport's daily run—she was certainly nowhere near the speed of an ordinary liner; but that, no doubt, as they told him in the engineers' mess, was a "question of coal." He chafed daily about the run, which varied singularly little; otherwise he was not unhappy. The ward-room produced a pipe for him; he found several volumes of literary matter on board in somebody's "Self-Educator," and read many things with the satisfaction of feeling that he could have written them. He explained Collectivism to a commander who had never heard of it, and had long starry discussions after dinner about religion with his chaperon the Deputy Commissioner, who was inclined to believe in God. On the whole he was comfortable and important enough. He even made jokes about

being personally conducted, and his eye would often gleam with the thought of what he would have to say to Further Angus.

Vulcan sailed through blue and peaceful seas. It was Joan who, so to speak, was under the weather ; but Joan was not greatly depressed either. She still rode on the crest of the wave of drama that had carried her to the arms of the Roy ladies, and her father so much further. She felt, no doubt, that the drama required more of her in leaving her to take her part alone ; at all events she meant to play it out. The Roy ladies made several kinds of sweetmeats for her, and sat for long periods with her hand clasped in theirs. They did not belong to educated Calcutta ; Ananda was the only member of the family who was really progressive. But they were very dutiful and affectionate.

"Joan is already like our sister," they said, and they gave her the name of Padmini, after the dauntless queen. She was to teach them, but they found her all a humble passion to learn. They were very domestic in their ways, especially the grandmother, and very strictly religious. Joan put on the head-veil at once, and followed them about picking up idylls, and making notes of them, for two days.

"I shall find it very easy to adopt your religion," she said to Bepin, who also belonged to the Brahmo sect of her hostesses ; "I have never been able to agree with father and Herbert Spencer. But I am afraid," she added regretfully, "that I can never *feel* the Vedas like a Hindu."

Lucy Foley kept faithfully in touch with her, and duly reported to Michael.

"Joan is simply infatuated with those Brahmos. I suppose," she philosophised, "it's the result of being

brought up without *any* religion at all! You jump at the first one you meet. She would like to be initiated beforehand and be married with Brahmo ceremonies, but there isn't time."

"What's the hurry?" asked Foley.

"I don't know, since she has given up going to Aden. But for some reason it must be on the fifth, to be over by the sixth. Apparently that man Thakore has something to do with it—has had all along. They both bow, it seems, to his wishes. It's a matter of auspices and omens—you know what those people are."

"There never was any sense in her going to Aden," said Foley. "Mills won't be detained, of course. He'll give some sort of assurance to the fellow in charge there, and they'll let him take the first steamer home, to look after his constituency."

"Is there anything wrong with his constituency?"

"There's something wrong with every constituency, if you're not there," said her husband.

"Well, I wonder how he'll like Joan's being initiated, with a yellow shawl, into the New Dispensation of the Brahmo Somraj," speculated Lucy.

"She has made a singular choice," said Mr. Foley. "Dey represents nothing but the defects of his class—vain, unbalanced, hysterical as a girl. He has no influence and never can have any; but he's quite capable of getting himself into the hands of the police."

"I would much prefer, very much prefer, that she and her Bepin should be married in the Cathedral."

"There isn't time for that either," said Michael, "if it must be on the fifth. A nice job for the Arch-deacon! But under the Act he'd have to do it. He could only insist on the banns. 'Joan Mills and Bepin Behari Dey, both of this parish!'"

"I don't know how you have the heart to laugh," Lucy told him. "Poor old John!"

"Poor old John—yes, it's rough luck on him. How does he take it?"

"I haven't seen him, and I know he hasn't seen her, since——"

"Since they shipped Vulcan," said Foley; and his wife nodded.

Michael laughed again, a man's unfeeling guffaw.

"Well, you'll admit the situation is a little—delicate," he said. "Poor old John!—he's well out of it."

"He may be well out of it," said Lucy; "I don't believe, myself, that they would ever have been happy. But he'll never marry any other woman. And he's coming here to tea this afternoon, and I *hope* he'll talk. You can go and play golf."

Michael did as he was told, and John came as Mrs. Foley hoped he would. He came to tea, and he talked—at least he did not refrain from talking—about the matter which was occupying so much of his little friend's heart and mind. From him, at least, she had not to complain of the lack of a serious view. He spoke of it briefly and drily, but Lucy thought he had aged in contemplating it. Only once did he make any reference to the reverse he had suffered.

"I would do anything to save her from it," said Lucy.

He turned a glance upon her.

"Quite apart from the hope I myself once had," he told her, "so would I."

He went away knowing that Joan Mills was to marry Bepin Behari Dey on the fifth of March, in order that the ceremony might be over by the sixth—"it was a matter of auspices and omens"—and as he thought about the two dates the second began to torment him

with some obligation unfulfilled. As he turned in at the gate of his club he remembered, and went hastily to his room, where he wrote a note to the Rani Janaki.

"I am so sorry about the sixth," he wrote, "but I shall not be able to lunch after all. It is my day with the Viceroy, and he has asked me to lunch there and drive with him afterwards to Convocation to get a longer talk over one or two troublesome things in connection with his speech. If I may, I'll look in on Sunday."

He finished with a commonplace and sent it off by the messenger in scarlet and gold that knew the way so well to the stucco palace in Park Street. Then his mind turned back to the dates, dwelling on the fifth. He had got rid of the sixth. But about the fifth—there seemed nothing that could be done. Nothing. They would live in Calcutta; she would be more and more identified with the squalid forces that were gathering against law and order, making it hard, and ever harder, for men that were doing their best.

"If she wanted to marry an Indian," he reflected, "she might at least have chosen a decent fellow. There are plenty of them."

He had brought himself to that, and, for him, it was a long way to come.

The fifth fell on a Thursday; and that morning Game, breakfasting unusually early, found Beauchamp at the table. He hailed the Commissioner of Police with surprise. "You in chambers?" he said.

"Yes, rather," said Beauchamp. "Since Monday. My memsahib made tracks for the kids last week, and I couldn't stick the empty house."

"Good!" said Game. "Anything new?"

Beauchamp selected an orange.

"Nothing of any importance," he said. "I think

we've bagged our young gentleman doubles—some of 'em, anyway."

"You mean the Putwa dacoity," said Game; and Beauchamp nodded with a grin.

"Our old friend Ganendra," he said, "I begin to have an admiration for that man."

"He preaches a fair sermon," said Game with indifference.

"He's quite as good at a curtain-raiser," retorted Beauchamp; and Game, at the reference to Jotindra's unlucky zenana, smiled in spite of himself.

Beauchamp peeled his orange with solicitude.

"The young gentlemen on our list are all his friends and pupils," he went on freely to the Home Secretary. "Attached to a seminary he runs in Nagtollah. Quite a superior place of its kind. The warrants issue to-day."

"You've brought the boots home to them," said Game.

"They will have an opportunity of trying them on. There were two hockey pairs," replied the Commissioner, stacking his orange-peel. "By the way, Ganendra's under-study in the Nagtollah business is that particularly precious young man who did secretary to Vulcan Mills—we hope to get him too."

"Oh!" said Game, "Bepin Behari Dey."

"That's his name."

"When," asked Game quickly, "do you propose to get him?"

"Very shortly. I'm not sure whether he's in to-day's lot." Beauchamp neatly wiped his moustache. "Well—the weary round, the common task——" and he pushed back his chair.

"Wait a minute," said Game; "Bepin Behari Dey is going to be married—to-day."

"Is he? Well, that happens early and often, doesn't it?"

"It is happening once too often," Game said with restraint. "He proposes to marry Miss Mills."

"The deuce he does!" exclaimed Fred Beauchamp, and looked at Game. "The deuce he does!" he repeated, and looked elsewhere.

"Yes," said Game. "To-day."

Beauchamp took out his watch and glanced at it mechanically; Game did the same.

"I don't know Miss Mills," said the Commissioner, a little elaborately, "but I don't think she ought to be allowed to marry a possible felon—if it can be prevented. There's not too much time, but—should you care to come with me?"

"I would rather like to know what happens," stammered Game.

"What about your turning up at Lal Bazar?"

"Well, what about it?" replied Game almost roughly. "I might have come to lodge a complaint."

"So you might. And anyhow—what's the difference?"

"Nothing," said Game; and without more words the two went out together, leaving the Home Secretary's servant with a surprised hand upon the cover of the omelette.

The Commissioner's private motor was waiting for him under the big pipal at the Park Street gate. His chauffeur was a "plain clothes man," and for a plain clothes man drove very well.

"Gad!" said Beauchamp as they got into it, "this is a useful invention. I call it the legs of the law."

CHAPTER XXIX

AT Lal Bazar they found, to Beauchamp's disgust, that Bepin's name was not upon any warrant that was to be served that day. There were strong grounds for suspecting him of having been one of the notable six, but the evidence was not complete. The Inspector in charge of the matter assured the Commissioner that by the next day it would be, and they knew exactly where to find Dey.

"I don't think we'll chance it, Cummins," said Beauchamp, and wrote a note to the Presidency Magistrate in the next street. "Go yourself for this—take my machine—and *go*—do you understand? Tell Mr. Edwards it's pressing. Take the Moulvie and Kazim and—we want this fellow, Cummins. Report here as soon as possible."

"They know his address," he told Game, "and if he hasn't started——"

"And if he has?"

"Cummins has his instructions. He knows what Dey's movements are likely to be."

The two men sat in the inner office, from which the Acting Deputy Commissioner removed himself at the well-nigh unprecedented arrival of the Home Secretary. A telephone message from the Magistrate had told them the warrant had issued, but was useless to calculate the time it might take to serve. They could only wait. Beauchamp produced cigars and they smoked,

Beauchamp tilting back in his chair with his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and talking elaborately of other matters. At the back of his sagacious head Beauchamp was remembering a number of things—what he would have called “gup”—about John Game and Vulcan Mills’ daughter—and correcting a certain impression.

“There’s no politics in this,” he said to himself. “He doesn’t care a brass farthing about Vulcan, and never did.”

In the outer of the two white-washed rooms the work of the day went on. Inspectors came in with reports, orderlies brought despatches, the Deputy Commissioner, at the caged end of the long desk, looked up files and dossiers. Through the open window and up from the courtyard below came the sound of wheels; the imperative beat of horses’ feet, the talk of men off duty. On the lower half of the venetian shutter a crow balanced itself, impudently near, a Calcutta crow, full of bad language, and blasphemed Beauchamp’s Department.

“If you ask me,” Beauchamp was saying, “to name the headquarters of anarchy for this country, I should say the Reading-room of the British Museum. The latest works on explosives promptly and politely supplied, and kind specialists all ready for our young Bengali visitors to consult—what?”

“Only too likely, I am afraid,” replied Game, with his eyes on the door, at which a tread had stopped sooner than they expected.

“Come in,” shouted Beauchamp; and Inspector Cummins appeared.

“You haven’t got him?”

“No, sir. The place was shut up. I ascertained it had been for three days. He slept last night at the Nagtollah shop, and there we just missed him. It’s as

empty as a plague hospital, sir ; but we got hold of the sweeper. He told us Dey had gone away for good—stuck to it. Showed us his bunk and so forth, and he'd taken his bedding and all his personal effects, sir."

Beauchamp looked at Game.

"There you are," he said. "You tried the Roy address?" he asked Cummins.

"Yes, sir, second. Got hold of the old man and one of the sons. He wasn't there, hadn't been since yesterday at six o'clock. The young lady had gone to meet him somewhere ; they couldn't say where. They admitted the marriage was to come off, but wouldn't give any details. We didn't search, sir. It's a very good class house, and full of women."

"That will do, Cummins," said Beauchamp. And "There you are," he said to Game again, as the Inspector went out.

They looked at one another.

"Mrs. Foley hadn't the least idea where the ceremony would take place?" asked Beauchamp.

"Not the least, except that it would not be in——"

"A white man's church," supplied Beauchamp ; and Game nodded.

"But that was on Monday. She may know now," said the Commissioner of Police, and took up the receiver on his desk. "Will you telephone, or shall I?"

"You, I think. Don't frighten her."

Beauchamp asked for the Foleys' number, and in a moment the bell sounded in reply.

"Is that Mrs. Foley? Good morning, Mrs. Foley. I'm Beauchamp. Isn't it to-day that your friend Miss Mills is to be married? * * * Oh, really? Yes, indeed, I quite agree with you. But you don't know where? * * * No. I don't suppose she would—— Oh,

Howrah? At eleven-thirty? No one else to be present—I see. To drive there with him—Miss Mills, you mean.
* * * Quite so. Thanks very much, Mrs. Foley. So sorry to have troubled you. Good-bye.”

“Eleven-thirty, at Howrah. That means a registrar—that means a *native* registrar,” said Beauchamp, and got up. “I know the man—in fact, I got him his job.”

He looked at Game, and then at his watch.

“Eleven-ten,” he said. “Shall we try it?”

“If you think it’s good enough,” said John briefly, and took up his hat. Further delegation to Cummins seemed out of the question.

The Inspector was waiting in the outer office and followed at a sign down the private stairs to the courtyard, where the motor still pulsated in the shade. The three got into it, and one of the native policemen took a place by the driver. Beauchamp directed the chauffeur and pulled down the window-shades.

“Don’t kill anybody, George,” he added ; and George understood.

They sat very grim before Cummins, and very silent, as the motor sped along the streets and through the squares between Lal Bazar and the north-western suburb across the river. Mindful of the bullock traffic to the jetties, George avoided the Strand Road, and took them by the next street parallel. It was crowded enough, but there was great alacrity in making way for a vehicle so clearly in a hurry. One or two men in brokers’ gharries recognised Beauchamp’s motor and looked after it curiously, but the shades remained down.

“Steady, George,” admonished Beauchamp, as they shaved the turn at Fairlie Place, and turned again into the long straight run to the bridge.

“Where the devil are you going?” he exclaimed.

The motor had swerved to the side of the road, and was slowing, apparently to enable Kazim to speak to a brother red turban at the corner.

"Get on, George," shouted Beauchamp.

"Yes, sir. That was Jamini. He's been working up Dey for some time. They're just ahead, he says, in a first-class ticca. Driver's got a yellow turban."

The motor was dodging among the drays and trams and ox-carts, the private carriages and luggage-laden gharries that crowded the road to the bridge, across which lay the railway station for all western India. Beauchamp stood up and leaned across Cummins to look ahead over the chauffeur's shoulder. On the other side of the press, in a cluster of ox-carts piled with hides, the sun smote a yellow turban on a box-seat. Beauchamp could even see an elbow, in a black sleeve, sticking out at the side of the gharry.

"Yes, by Jove, there they are—there he is," he corrected himself. "Now we shan't be long. To the left there, George—never mind—we're in a hurry. Hey, there, you *badzat!* *"

George pushed in and on, but the crush to the bridge had begun, and the whole mass moved slowly.

John Game made no sign of sharing the excitement of the chase. He lifted just a perceptible eyelid at Beauchamp's announcement, then returned to the official papers which he had taken from his breast pocket some minutes before. Beauchamp glanced at him, and dropped into his seat again with folded arms. The quarry was sure, two hundred yards ahead under the betrayal of a yellow turban, so sure that the Commissioner of Police began to think of his dignity, and to arrange in his own mind how not to be present,

* Loafer.

so far as the newspapers were concerned, at this not very important arrest.

Suddenly the traffic about them thickened, slowed, stopped, and the motor with it. George made a desperate effort to slide past a dray full of earthenware pots, and succeeded, at the expense of only two, but got no further.

"*Pul bund hai ! **" exclaimed Kazim.

"What's that?" said Beauchamp on his feet again. "The bridge? *Damnation!* The hour changed this morning!"

He turned upon Game a discomfited face.

"Confound it, Cummins; you might have thought of that. To make the arrest in this jam will be the devil."

"I don't see the ticca now, sir," said the chauffeur. "I'm afraid——"

"The dickens you don't," said Beauchamp, searching the pack of vehicles in front of them. It was varied enough, and culminated toward the middle in the bright red bulk of the King-Emperor's mail van. On the other side, patient against the barrier, was a cluster of ox-carts with hides; but nowhere a ticca-gharry with a yellow turban.

"He's just done it sir," said George, referring to the yellow turban. "They've been the last across."

From where they sat in their panting motor they could see the masts and funnels of the river-craft waiting to pass up and down.

"*Oh, damnation!*" said Beauchamp again.

"Then we're done," remarked Game, and restored the papers to his breast pocket.

"No, by Jove," said Beauchamp. "Shall we try it in a dinghy? No, it would take longer, and we might not get a gharry on the other side. Squeeze in somehow, George. I'll countermand the infernal bridge."

* "The bridge is closed."

"Can you?" asked Game. "Isn't it a Port Commissioners' Regulation?"

"I will," said the Commissioner of Police.

And George squeezed in, while Kazim beside him swelled visibly with pride. Beauchamp wrote a line in pencil on a leaf from his pocket-book, and gave it to Cummins, who ran to the bridge office. He was away a time that was all too appreciable, and when he returned, red and perspiring, it was to say—

"I can't find the engineer, sir, and the men won't take it from me."

"You can't find anything to-day," said Beauchamp; and as he spoke the detachable section of the bridge began slowly to float out of the way.

He got out of the motor as he spoke and went quickly toward the bridge-house on the Calcutta side. Game looked after him, but sat where he was. A spot of colour burned on each of his cheek-bones, and his mouth was pulled into an expression of contempt. One would say that his blood urged this expedition while he himself despised it.

In three minutes Beauchamp came back.

"That's all right," he said, and dropped into his place again.

George edged in among the hides, and a couple of policemen on bridge duty held back the traffic behind the motor. George kept her nose against the gates with what looked like wonderful control for ten long minutes, while windlasses slowly creaked and tackle slowly strained in the task of bringing the floating section back to its place. Then to the rage of the river and the premature joy of the bridge-bound medley that waited, the road again lay broad and solid, the gates parted, and the motor bounded forward.

They were across in a flash, up the slope past the magistrate's house in another. At the turn beyond the railway shops a pariah, sleeping in the sun in the middle of the road, met his death, and they did not stop to inquire. Another looked after them as they sped, and when they were well past, barked perfunctorily twice.

The little white house of Bepin's friend, Mr. Ram Chunder Chakravati, Issuer of Marriage Licences for the district of Howrah, stood behind its three crooked palms facing the end of the street. On the verandah sat two figures, to whom a servant was bringing something on a tray. Cummins saw them first.

"We've got him, sir," said he. "That's the man—having refreshment."

"Yes," said Beauchamp, over his shoulder, "we've got him. But whether—"

He glanced at Game and dropped into his seat again. Game caught with a frown at the rocking arm of his seat.

"Your fellow drives a confounded lot too fast," he said.

On they came, in a cloud of dust and presentiment; and Bepin, from where he sat, suddenly thought he saw Fate approaching very quickly, with a red turban beside the driver. He put down his glass of soda-water and snatched something from an inner pocket.

"The police!" he said to Joan. "They will try to arrest me."

"But why?" she asked in bewilderment.

He did not answer, but showed her the revolver.

"I will not be taken," he said wildly. "It is not time. I will kill any man who touches me."

There was only one definite thing in the situation, only one thing to understand, and Joan grasped it.

"Bepin!" she exclaimed imperatively. "Give that to me!"

He looked at her outstretched hand, and hesitated

"Give it to me," she repeated. "*Give it to me!*"

"You are right," he said. "They shall not have a handle against me;" and as the motor pulled up at the gate she slipped the weapon into her pocket.

So Cummins and Kazim made the arrest easily enough. Bepin's vehicle was drawn up under a tree waiting to take him back with his bride; and into that the Inspector invited him to get, Joan accompanying him. The driver under his yellow favour, looked very much askance at the addition to the wedding party. Cummins hustled Bepin a little—he had been hustled a good deal himself—and made no allowance for a farewell communication with Mr. Ram Chunder Chakravati, whose lemonade was left almost untasted in the glasses. The motor remained impassive in the shade of some trees until the hired carriage had driven away, Cummins not having had occasion to refer again to his superior officer. When George finally turned for instructions, Beauchamp glanced at the registry office and then at his companion.

"Shall we—ascertain?" said he.

The lines about Game's mouth seemed to have deepened as he sat.

"I see no particular necessity," he replied. "Drop me, will you, at the office?"

"Back, George," said Beauchamp, reflecting that Cummins would know.

So, to his astonishment, there was nobody about when Mr. Ram Chunder Chakravati came rubbing his hands out of the inner part of his house to say that all was now ready for the formalities of registration. He rubbed his hands until the truth trickled to him through the mouths of stray lookers-on. Then he went into the house and washed them, having heard of the police.

CHAPTER XXX

BY four o'clock that afternoon Bepin had been released on bail. Beauchamp, when he heard of it, lamented his wasted morning to the Acting Deputy Commissioner, declaring that the thing had not been worth doing. A wedding is incompatible with incarceration, and a good round conviction is almost an indefinite postponement; but as the Commissioner of Police observed, there was now no reason why the charming young people should not be united next day.

"And in that case Game can do his own chasing," remarked Beauchamp.

He spoke with reasonable irritation, the motor having suffered a puncture on the way back. He was also a trifle disappointed in Game, whose sporting instinct seemed to be unreliable.

"Hang it if he would pick up the birds!" criticised Beauchamp, who had helped so materially to bring them down.

Joan, too, when Bepin rejoined her that evening under the roof of the Roy ladies, may have had some natural expectation that the event frustrated to-day would be for an early to-morrow. The Roy ladies, all sympathy and scorn, also took it for granted. Only Bepin himself, moody and absent, was uncertain, apologetic. His case had been adjourned till the tenth; there were four free days.

They sat in council in the drawing-room of the Roy ladies, which offered European amenities of tables

and chairs. The Roy ladies said little in Bepin's presence, even the two who spoke a little English ; they gave their attention to the serving of cakes and lemonade. They seemed, in their silent way, displeased with Bepin, displeased with him for having been arrested, for being out on bail, for bringing his suspected person under their roof. They addressed him curtly, and looked in other directions. The bird-like old grandmother huddled in the corner of the sofa, was plainly more displeased than anybody, as she watched, alert and eager, the words she did not understand.

"Where is Ananda?" asked Bepin. "I must see him."

The mother and aunt of Ananda looked at one another, confirmatory glances, with alarm lurking behind them.

"Ananda is gone up-country," said his mother. "He had nothing to do with that affair, Bepin Behari. He is a patriot, but he is not a dacoit."

"No one will think of arresting Ananda," said Bepin. "His father's position is too respectable."

He glanced, as he spoke, at the door, which opened to admit Ananda, with his curly hair and spectacles. The young men embraced and sat down on adjoining chairs, still holding each other's hand. No allusion was made to the statement of Ananda's mother, nor did she say anything in explanation. They gazed at each other expressively, and Ananda cried—

"There is three thousand rupees on your head!"

"On my feet, rather," smiled Bepin. "To prevent my running away."

"It is a false scent," exclaimed the Roy youth joyously.

"Yes," Bepin replied. "And I can easily prove it. But even a false scent in the hands of the police is a

bad thing. It sometimes leads to a true one," he added quietly in Bengali ; and the grandmother, who caught the words, doubled in her lips with satisfaction and nodded several times.

Ananda also looked thoughtful, and Bepin glanced restively at the women in the room. Joan, for the meaning of his glance, was among them. She occupied the other end of the sofa from the grandmother, but she was among them. She sat in her own heroic atmosphere with her hand before her eyes, waiting a little on events, but more than ever ready to do her part. The grandmother looked at her with undisguised hostility.

"Are you inclined to eat the air for a few minutes?" asked Bepin in Urdu of young Roy, in a low tone which his mother could well pretend not to have heard, and not to have understood if she did hear.

"Come, Ananda," she said quickly before he could reply. "Come, mother. Come, sister. The two who are to marry must talk of their affairs and what they will do. They have had great trouble and confusion to-day, and in the presence of others how can they speak freely?"

With this constraint upon them she shepherded them easily out, Ananda first.

"She is afraid of me," said Bepin to Joan as the door closed. "She will not give her son, though he is already given. Some mothers have not the very high spirit. Mine is dead. It is as well."

It was their first moment quite alone since Cummins had stepped up to them on the registrar's verandah. Joan stopped thinking, and leaned toward him across the arm of the sofa, clasping her hands.

"Bepin," she said, "I know you are innocent of this charge that has been brought against you, but I want you to tell me so."

"I can prove it."

"I don't want you to prove it. I want you to say it," she insisted. "Prove it to the Court. Say it to me."

He looked at her compassionately.

"You have been upset to-day, or you would understand that one includes the other," he said. "But since it pleases you, I am innocent. Do you think I am fit for no higher service than that?"

"Service," Joan repeated blankly. "Service by stealing?"

"It was the mad exploit of some misguided boys," he reassured her. "We must have money, but I am all against that way. It is better even to get it by cursing."

"By cursing?"

"It is not my department," he said indifferently, answering the surprise in her tone. "I have nothing to do with that side. But it is necessary that the unenlightened should pay as well as the enlightened. So young boys in the dress of priests are sent into the zenanas, with collecting-books and curses. As they are the disciples of priests they curse very well——"

"It is mediæval," murmured Joan.

"I think it has always been Bengali," Bepin replied simply. "But when they arrest me it shall be for a very different offence to that of pilfering."

Joan looked at him with a clearing eye.

"I know you are prepared to suffer splendidly," she reminded him.

"I desire to write my name among my country's heroes," he frowned. "And it will be written there in letters of gold. But I wish we had married to-day. Sri Ganendra will be unhappy because of this."

"My father, also——" Joan began, and stopped. She was a truthful person, and she could not say that

her father would be altogether sorry. There is no reason to suppose that Abraham would not have welcomed the interference of the police.

"He would not like to read that his son-in-law had been before the magistrate for house-breaking," said Bepin quietly. "But on the tenth I shall have an opportunity of clearing my character."

The inference was not difficult, especially to a bride postponed, but Joan had another point of view.

"Bepin," she said earnestly, "I believe in you."

The hard vain look vanished from his face, and tears started to his eyes as he returned her look. He slipped down upon his knees and caught the hem of her dress to his lips.

"Don't do that," she said, drawing it away. "I believe in you, and I would like to show the world that I do."

"And in days to come you shall be proud as well," he told her, wiping his eyes. "And the credit will be yours, not mine! You have been my inspiration, and my courage, and my hope—you and your noble father, of whom I cannot speak—"

"To wait till after the tenth will look as if I doubted you, Bepin. Let us be married to-morrow."

He turned upon her a face full of affection, and for the moment of irresolution.

"It is as though my heart were pulled out of my breast," he said. "To-morrow! Oh! if it might have been to-day!"

"There is not so much difference," Joan told him, "between to-day and to-morrow. It comes very soon, to-morrow."

Bepin held up his head with sudden exaltation.

"Yes, it comes very soon. But it is not my day to marry, to-morrow."

"Are the omens against it?" asked Joan smiling, a little shamefaced.

"No—yes. The omens are against it. And I have other affairs very pressing. I cannot marry to-morrow. But, dear Lotus-eyed, if—if all is well we can marry on the seventh—eighth, perhaps. I hope," he hesitated, "all to be well."

"So long as it is before the tenth. And—I am afraid you must go now, Bepin. I am very tired."

"Yes, I am afraid I must go now," he repeated, and looked a little dazed, like one who has come suddenly upon the end of known ways. He rose with trembling lips, and stood silent a minute.

"My mother is dead," he said. "She cannot bless my patriotic undertaking. You would have been mother and wife in one. Bless it in her place."

"Dear Bepin, I bless with all my heart whatever your hand finds to do for your country," Joan answered smiling. "Good night."

She gave him her hand and he took it, and stood for an instant abashed, holding it. A wave of gentleness visited her; he looked so downcast.

"Bepin," she said, "kiss me." She held out her cheek. The favour was new; but after all—since it was to have been to-day—

The young man's face changed.

"Kiss me, and *don't cry*," she commanded; at which, a little awkwardly, he did it, turned hurriedly, and went away without another word. In the passage she heard him accosted by Ananda; they left the house together.

"Would have been," she repeated to herself, puzzled, as she went to say good night to the Roy ladies, "'Would have been.' He is just a little weak in his tenses."

CHAPTER XXXI

IT was one o'clock in the morning, and Park Street, Calcutta, where the street-lamp casts the shadow of a palm, lay very still and slumber-bound. Lent had put an end to the dances, and the carriages of small dinner-parties had rolled home long ago. Nothing stirred but a jackal exploring a refuse heap; nothing spoke but a crow, complaining half awake of his neighbour. The south wind only was abroad, lifting the heavy fronds to listen to a song of the sea; and from some exiled garden came the scent of violets.

The iron gates of the house of Kristodas Mukerji were shut and locked; and he and all his servants slept inside, including the gate-keeper. The whole world had not gone to bed under the electric fans of Park Street, however, nor even behind the yellow walls of the quarters. The servant of a chemist's shop at a corner, where a red eye indicated a languid attention to business at all hours, stretched his length, tightly rolled in a sheet, along the banquette in front of his master's premises. He it was, after long persuasion, who pointed out the house of Sir Kristodas to a coolie with a letter.

The coolie had come a long way and was weary; but having accomplished the distance he was too faithful a man to be vanquished by the difficulty of waking a gate-keeper. Patiently and long he shouted--

"*Durwan ! * * * O Durwan ! * * * Durwan-ji !*" until from an upper window neighbouring came the voice of a sahib in anger—

"Shut up, you brute!" accompanied by the unmistakable crash of an empty soda-water bottle in the road.

When that happened it seemed better even to the sleeping durwan of a High Court judge to answer inquiries, and the letter was taken in by a bare arm, a turbanless grey head, and a lantern.

"For whom was it?"

"For the Rani-sahiba."

"Whence came it?"

The coolie mentioned an address in Nagtollah, adding that a receipt in the handwriting of the Rani-sahiba was essential. The durwan blinkingly turned the letter over.

"I myself will sign for this," he said. "*Bus.*"

"Nā," said the coolie, "the order is for the Rani-sahiba's writing. It is to be brought, brother. The matter is a very heavy matter."

"I myself will sign the paper. How can the Rani-sahiba be roused up who has darkened her window these two hours? It is fool's talk."

"Nā, brother. Lacking this will be no backsheesh," pleaded the coolie.

"Then it will be to wait. I will give the letter into the hand of the ayah, and she can do as she pleases," said the durwan, and shut the gate.

In a little while he came back.

"*Dekko,*" * he said. "Here is the paper. I have signed it. So also has David the butler, who being a dog of a Portuguese can write in English. The ayah will give the letter at the coming of daylight. Begone."

* "Look you."

The gates shut decisively, and bolts ended the discussion. The coolie argued and protested awhile to the empty street. Then he rolled his person in his cotton sheet, and stretched himself along the wall to await the break of day. Sleep was the easy gift of God, and the Rani-sahiba, with backsheesh depending on it, would not refuse her signature to a poor man in the morning.

Nor did she, when the ayah went coughing gently through her bedroom very early, with the letter and the receipt in her hand. She gave her signature, but glanced impatiently at the familiar handwriting of the address.

"Balkrishna wants only more money," she said, and slipped the envelope unopened under her pillow. But it throbbed there, so that she could not sleep again, and presently she drew it out and opened it. It was from Balkrishna, but it was not a request for money. It was rather in the nature of a payment.

Janaki read the letter, with eyes that grew larger toward the end of it.

"Go and prepare the bath," she said to her watching woman, and read it again. When the ayah came back she was nearly dressed.

"My other slipper—quickly, Junia." She thrust her bare foot into it, threw her *sari* over her head, and ran out of the room, taking the letter with her.

"Ram, Ram!" said the ayah. "She is gone to her father. There is a misfortune."

But she had not gone to her father. Instead, she was climbing the steep little staircase that led from the third floor to the roof of the house. There, praying in the sunrise, she knew upon whom she could count.

He stood near the parapet, outlined in his saffron

robe against the yellow east. A rosary hung from his fingers, but his lips were still, his soul having found God in the exquisite dawn. He stood there with his face a little turned, so that its pure profile was cut against the morning, so solitary and so at peace that Janaki, in the little open door of the roof, hung back timidly. Almost at once he was aware of her, and came towards her, smiling and blessing her, as if she were no surprise.

"You have come up to pray, little sister? It is well."

"Oh, Maharaj," she stammered. "Have I been guilty of breaking upon your devotions? I thought perhaps they would be over. And I have a letter—a very serious letter. I must ask you—"

Yadava took her hand and led her toward the parapet.

"Look," he said, with the other dawn still on his face. "Homage! Homage! Brightness is the form of the Supreme. Thence comes the life of the soul."

The words were words of the Preacher in the Song-Sermon, the oldest sermon of all, words before which Janaki's spirit inclined as a flower to the wind. She too murmured a line of scripture, looking wistfully into the east, far and vast and golden, fretted with filmy palms beyond the white flat roofs of the city, and ready to break, behind the finger of a minaret, into a line of fire.

"The light of the Self as my Self in my Self," murmured the priest; and Janaki sank down to his feet and brushed them with her forehead.

The touch recalled him; he put out his hand and raised her.

"You have a letter," he said. "What is a letter? A letter with a threat in it? What is a threat?"

Things remote, and trivial, and poor enough at that height, but she held out the letter.

"Not a threat," she said. "I would not care for a threat—how many have come to this house! A warning—from a friend, Swami-ji."

Yadava read the letter, and his face faded to the consideration of it. It was as if they had sunk from the house-top to the streets of the city, from some angerless dimension to the venomous hearts of men.

"Balkrishna Roy," he said. "Your cousin by marriage?"

Janaki nodded.

"A very respectable family. What can such a youth know of intentions like these?"

"Maharaj, many of them know—many of the respectable families! They go to Court and plead before my father, and they know. They take office under the Government, and they know. They dine at the table of the Viceroy, and all the while they know. With one hand they sign loyal addresses, and with the other they subscribe to societies to promote—change."

The priest glanced again at the letter, and looked back at her gravely.

"And your hands, Janaki-bai?"

She bent her head like a child, and pushed a pebble about with her foot.

"Since they began to trouble my father I have given nothing," she said. "Before that—yes, Swami-ji. I have wished to help—to free the Mother."

"Oh, child, child!"

"And eternally lift from us—

O Mahadeo—the cloud of ignorance."

It was not wisely done. And yet it has wakened the good feeling that sent this letter."

"But, Swami-ji—what to do?"

Yadava reflected.

"There is truth here," he said, tapping the letter. "It lies between the lines. Kristodas must not go to the Convocation. It may very well be he who is intended. My own anxiety is for another, but it may very well be he."

"You have information, Swami-ji?"

"I have apprehensions; and the police have apprehensions. We could get nothing altered, not even the route, but there is great anxiety. Kristodas—yes, they are very bitter against Kristodas. We cannot let him go."

"But how prevent him? He must not know of this," cried Janaki, "or he will surely go, to show that he is the equal in courage of any Englishman."

"Come," said Yadava, "we will find a way."

Ten minutes later the Rani Janaki stood by the door of the priest's room with a tray.

"Maharaj, are you sure it is safe—quite sure?" she begged.

The Brahmin wetted his finger, drew it through the powder and put it again to his mouth. Janaki gave a little nod of agreement and relief, and he poured the rest into the teacup.

"He will come back early from Court and he will be a little sick—dizzy perhaps. That is all. To-morrow he will be the better for it. But he is easily frightened about his health. He will not go to Convocation."

And Janaki took her father's toast and tea, with an old zenana remedy for biliousness concealed in it, into his room. The powder was well dissolved. Yadava had stirred it with his finger, which completed her reassurance. Mrs. Sidney Gray had been very influential with her, but she was a daughter of the East.

For a time she thought only, with great tenderness, of her father. For some days Sir Kristodas had been unlike himself. Usually talkative, he had little or nothing to say. Even the doings of Syed Ali, a brother judge of whom he was an old and peppery critic, failed to draw from him more than a shake of the head. His fretfulness fell away from him; nothing seemed to rouse it. Nothing except the praise of the Anglo-Indian newspapers, which extended themselves over his judgment in the case of Ganendra Thakore. A gentle blankness seemed to take its place, and a quiet indifference. Yadava was constantly with him; and one or two old orthodox friends, who had forgotten the way to his house, remembered it again; but he saw no one else. An invitation to dine came from the Lieutenant-Governor.

"Go you," he said to Janaki, "but make my excuses. I am too old now. You may put it down to the asthma."

In the Bar Library they said he was failing, and it was told in support of this that he had taken advantage of a couple of Court holidays to visit a shrine to which his family had once made yearly pilgrimage, and that he had gone far from empty-handed. Janaki had another view.

"He is sorry," she whispered to herself. "He is sorry about Ganendra." And so she reflected again this morning, excusing her device with the thought that Sir Kristodas would not greatly regret being unable to attend the Convocation of the University. It would give him no pleasure, she thought, with this private grief eating at his heart. He was better and safer at home, for though it might be some one else, the priest had agreed that it might very well be he. Then, suddenly, a vague anxiety stirred in her own mind, hung there formless

for an instant, and flashed into a fear. Some one else ! Who, then ? All the wild talk she had heard for the last six months surged back through her brain. Who, then ? And why should danger to any Imperial alien make so desperate a clutch at her heart ? She sprang up and looked about her, wildly and helplessly, as if she herself were at bay and terrified, then ran to her desk, unlocked it, and seized the uppermost of a packet of letters. Her fingers trembled so that she opened it with difficulty, and as she searched and read she gave a little cry of supplication to one known to her.

" *O Kali-mai !* " she moaned. " O mother Kali—— "

A phrase of Yadava's came back to her as she stood quivering under the new apprehension with Game's letter of apology in her hand. " We could get nothing altered. " Priest and police, they could get nothing altered. No change of route, or date, or hour, no cancelling of the engagement of anybody concerned—nothing altered in a public fixture duly notified and to be duly carried out. What, then, could she hope to get altered ?

Nevertheless she snatched at pen and paper ; and at the forms instilled by Mrs. Sidney Gray.

" Dear Mr. Game, " she wrote. " I implore you not to drive with His Excellency to the Convocation this afternoon. If you could persuade him not to go it would be better, but though it may be his duty as Chancellor, it is not yours, is it ? If you will come here I will tell you all I know—all. I have certain information of a deadly attempt intended, and I am full of fear. For God's sake I ask you—do not go. *Do not.* "

She finished with the conventional termination and addressed the letter. Then she dropped another

plummet into her heart, and opened the envelope again to add, while tears fell thick upon her hand—

“Those who are wiser than I have shown me that I am wrong in my way of being devoted to my country. I cannot be wrong in any way of being faithful to a friend.”

She sent the letter by the most reliable of her father's peons, and then sat in grief upon the floor. Perhaps she meditated the side issues of revolution; perhaps she devised penances and pilgrimages; perhaps she simply wept and was afraid. In any case it was the daughter of a Brahmin family of Mukerjis who sat there, and no bye-product of Oxford and Mrs. Sidney Gray. Deeper and deeper she sank into self-abnegation—there was nothing now that she would not fling away to stay that terrible arm of the Mother, the arm with the dagger, lifted when it pleased the Mother that her lotuses should be red. “*O Kali-mai!*” she moaned. “O mother Kali——”

Presently, with gathered resolution, she sprang up, took the warning letter and ran again to Yadava.

“Swami-ji,” she panted, “would it not be well to give this letter to the police?”

It was what he had been hoping for, not because he wanted the letter.

“And Balkrishna?” he reminded her. “Who has—perhaps—saved your father's life?”

“I cannot think of that,” she cried passionately. “He is very young. They will not be severe with him. He must take his chance. Let it be broken up—that nest of assassination.”

Yadava smiled. “It will be broken up,” he said. “To-day perhaps. Very soon. They are clever men, the Calcutta police. Closer and closer they have drawn their net about Ganendra Thakore's garden house in

Nagtollah until nothing now can slip out of it—not even a tin of Brand's Essence."

Janaki looked down, but the fever of reaction was in all her veins.

"I know about—Brand's Essence—Maharaj," she said with courage, and lifted her face ardently. "I will tell everything to the police. Now, this moment, take me to Mr. Beauchamp."

"You know?" said the priest gently. "Well—forget, little sister. The hearts of many people are dark with this knowledge. Only yesterday I myself supplied all that was lacking to ensure a successful raid. They are waiting but to complete one or two important implications. Cleanse your mind of these things. Remember only penitence, and rise through that to peace."

He held out the letter to her.

"This is useless," he said. "They have been told as much as this already."

She took it from his hand, knelt before him once more, and went back. He murmured something in the old tongue of his religion as he turned impassively away.

"When all acts are burnt to ashes in the fire of Wisdom——"

But Janaki watched and waited for the return of the messenger from the Calicut Club. When he came the receipt-book bore Game's initials only.

"The sahab sent many salaams," said the peon, "and will answer later."

CHAPTER XXXII

IT would be wrong to say that John Game paid no attention to the import of the Rani Janaki's letter. It reached him at the beginning of a heavy and a hurried day, handed in across a table breast-high with files upon details which had to be ready for the Viceroy at noon ; but he read it at once, and two or three times in the course of the morning his thought wandered to it again. He had lately been driving his mind sternly back to its old official mistress. India, and the future that was to be forged for India, had returned to the first place in his meditations as far as he could control them. Such satisfaction as he had he found in hard work leading to certain definite perspectives, and the key to one of these lay under his hand. The Viceroy would unlock it that afternoon.

The new perspectives—yes, they invited a man. India, coming at last to her own councils, would need all her old friends. The thought of how ill she could do without them gave a lift to his heart. Well, he for one would be ready enough to go on.

And Janaki's letter seemed a kind of first-fruits of his renewed devotion. He felt a fresh tenderness for her ; perhaps she stood to him for India as he thought of her—the India of his old dreams, the bride of his country, the enchantress of his race. India then could be kind to those who served and loved her. There was a solace that had its own sweetness in being so

cared for, and by one whose pulses might naturally enough beat for the other camp, had indeed been suspected of such a tendency. Game frowned at the dimness that came between him and the files; but Janaki would have been glad to know how she lightened an hour for him that morning. She never did know, poor Janaki—fate had sent her letter up a blind alley.

"Dear little Rani," he reflected, "what a good sort she is! But I must persuade her to stop reading the extremist newspapers. They are getting on her nerves."

He stowed the letter away in his pocket for the earliest reply possible, and picked up the final drafts for His Excellency. He was not reminded of it until lunch, when Lord Campden made a joke about a certain lamp-post.

"As I drive past that point this afternoon," said His Excellency, "I understand I am to be shot. Thoughtful of them to select one so near the hospital."

At which the Staff smiled, and the Household generally played up, but Stevenson Spence, Private Secretary, said in an undertone to Game—

"It's all very well for His Excellency. No responsibility attaches to *him* if he gets potted. But Beauchamp's worried to death about that lamp-post. There have been warnings from two or three sources."

"Yes," replied Game. "I've had one myself."

"Really?" said the Private Secretary in a tone which invited further confidence; but Game's face had dropped again into the absent sternness habitual to it of late, and he seemed to have forgotten. He had not forgotten: he was indeed busy with remembrance—of two women, one of his own race, and another. The

irony of the remembrance was playing rather sharply about his heart.

So they went on with their cutlets and their coffee, Lord Campden curtailing his cigarette in order that he might get the very last departmental bearings of the announcement he was to make that day. He too was enamoured of the new perspectives; and it might almost have been said that he and Game had carved this one out together. Sir Robert Farquhar had put up a sturdy opposition from the beginning.

"Make them wait till they deserve it," he said more than once.

"None of us," responded Lord Campden with a twinkle, "can be expected to wait as long as that," and the Secretary of State, six thousand miles away in Whitehall, had agreed with His Excellency; but the task of translating that agreement into fact had fallen chiefly upon Game. It was no easy one, the official world being as loth as ever to delegate either duty or privilege, but it had been at last accomplished, and in time for the special occasion which it was to make memorable. The secret had been very well kept. The Viceroy spoke with frank pleasure of the surprise he would have "up his sleeve" for the educated world of Calcutta.

"If they don't shoot me first," he jested.

Game took the final drafts to the Viceroy at noon, and it was at noon precisely that Bepin Behari Dey issued from Ganendra Thakore's old quarters in Ram Kishory's Lane and made his way on foot towards Cornwallis Street. There was nothing to be noted about his appearance, except a small leather dressing-bag in his hand, and a single curious point of light in the middle of the pupil of each eye. He walked with an odd immobility; one might say

that he carried his body, and his face had a dull flush. He held the dressing-bag carefully. It might also have been observed that he was followed at an inconspicuous distance by a well-grown coolie and a stalwart hawker of coloured beads, who kept an interested and puzzled eye upon the bag. It was always possible that Bepin Behari might jump his bail; but the bag, in broad daylight, was almost too much evidence, and he was not making for any station. Presently he turned into a shop for the sale of Bengali school-books. Having marked him there the hawker lowered his tray and drank at the nearest stand-pipe, and the coolie sat down and scratched himself.

They knew Bepin very well in the book-shop, which was only a book-shop among other things. At the back, for instance, it was an unsuspected printing-press, devoted to the issue, in the blackness of the night, of confiscated newspapers, inflammatory posters, and leaflets enjoining mothers to breed rebels from the cradle. The compositors of that printing-press were well acquainted with Bepin's handwriting, and Bepin himself was well acquainted with the serpentine lanes that touched the place in the rear and twisted off into the maze of North Calcutta. Standing inside he could be plainly seen to examine one and another of the classics presented for the use of University students. So long as he did that the coolie continued to scratch himself. When he disappeared behind a pile of books into the interior of the shop, and did not come out again in the course of half an hour, the coolie communicated briefly with two policemen, who straightway began to berate him well, apparently upon the subject of his bundles. In the end he submitted himself to one of them, cringing and protesting; and the other strolled away in search of

higher authority. The hawker remained beside his tray in an exhausted attitude; the policeman, with an unrelaxed hand on the coolie's arm, marched him a quarter of a mile in the face of all men, then turned up an alley and doubled back with him. It is not likely that either he or his caste brother Jamini expected to discover a printing-press, or anything else at the rear of the Bengali book-shop; but simple souls as they were, lacking even primary education as they did, they were still aware that there are two ways out of most situations, and they went to find the other.

The main street was full and moving, the fuller for the unaccustomed carriages, on their way to the University function of the year, which swelled the ordinary traffic. Ladies in the carriages—there were the usual heroic few—complained of the early afternoon heat, of the dust, of the tram-lines, of the smell of rancid *ghi* from the fried-cake shops, of all the unfamiliar jolt and discomfort of the native quarter. The crowd on foot was of the people, the ignorant, the hod-carriers, the street-vendors, the negligible. It was by no means a gay-tinted crowd, but nobody would have looked twice at a single saffron robe that blended with it; and the people were going so simply about their own affairs that the anxious air of a solitary priest would have gone unobserved too. Bepin brushed past him on his way to the book-shop, but poor Bepin, with his mind enlarged by modern science, had long ceased to attach any importance to priests. He would have been the last to notice.

There were hardly any students in the street—they were already gathered, no doubt, in the hall of Convocation further up, where the strip of crimson carpet on the steps proclaimed the expected Viceroy, and a couple of

mounted policemen circled and hovered with an anxious eye to the approach from the south. The life of the street was as normal as its heat and its noise. There seemed too many red turbans and white uniforms in it keeping unnecessary order ; wayfarers regarded them curiously, and carriage people smiled and said that such a show of force was absurd.

"It only encourages them," said Mrs. Livingstone Hooper.

Carriage after carriage rolled up, and motor after motor. The police sergeants made impatient way for them and sharply directed their parking, more sharply than seemed natural to the nerves even of persons responsible for congested thoroughfares. The Vice-Chancellor arrived, a distinguished Bengali Judge of Johnsonian wit and learning, with his speech in his hand. Fellows of the University of both races, *honoris causa* very various, Members of the Education Department, Heads of Mission Colleges, professors, boy graduates' relations gratified and lubricated, an occasional Secretary to Government, one after the other made their way over the red carpet, stepping delicately, and upstairs to the crowded hall. The Hon. Mr. Justice Syed Ali joined the Syndicate on the platform, and spoke gravely to the Vice-Chancellor of the absence of his colleague Sir Kristodas Mukerji, who had left Court very indisposed at noon. Two or three rows in the body of the hall were reserved for ladies ; then came the general public ; and the students filled up the back, rank upon rank, silent, whispering, waiting—very intensely waiting. The officials in front squared their shoulders, and the ladies settled their skirts composed and unaware ; but there was certainly a curious atmosphere in the back seats—of excitement where all should have been normal, of apprehension

where all should have been safe. The back seats were full of rumour, too full to be comfortable, but the students sat very still. Bepin Behari Dey, five years before, had been one of them there, ardent to receive his very creditable degree in Natural Sciences ; he might well have been among those sympathetically present to-day. But Bepin Behari remained within the shop for the sale of Bengali literature and works upon *belles lettres* prescribed for the use of University students. At least there was no reason to suppose that he was not within it.

At last the fluttering of the Body-guard pennons at the end of the street. Communication ran from red turban to red turban ; and the road, clear of heavy traffic for the past half-hour, grew clearer still. On they came with their cavalry trot, cleaving the empty road, lean and arrowy in their scarlet and gold, lance upstanding, the smartest bit of pageant in the world. In the carriage behind, the Viceroy and the Home Secretary, with a couple of aides-de-camp on the front seat, smiled and chatted as if they drove through circumstances of the happiest security. On, quickly and steadily, nearer and nearer to the shop for the sale of works upon sociology which inculcated, a little carelessly, the fetiches of Western politics. A world of simple purpose and resolution sounded in the beat of the horses' hoofs ; the sun struck gleam after gleam from the lance-points, and England's honour flashed even plainer into the eyes of Bepin Behari Dey as he lay in wait behind the balustrade of the flat roof of the book-shop. It could surely have been nothing else that made him suddenly put up his left hand in the action described by a witness later. He must have been dazzled, I think, by that flash, the mere splendour and indifference of it, so that his arm trembled as he lifted it—and the thing was heavy * * *

Moreover, he failed to calculate for the movement of the carriage, which had well passed before the shell struck the road with the tearing, crashing explosion that so frightened the pair. The Body-guard animals behaved admirably ; but the carriage horses, with the coachman swaying on the box, curved madly, leapt forward and bolted. The carriage lurched and lifted over some raw masonry by the roadside, and John Game went spinning out of it, striking heavily among the granite blocks. Then the terrified horses tore uncontrollably up the narrow street, the Body-guard racing behind, while the police closed round an ugly trench in the ground, on the edge of which lay the body of a dead pariah ; and twenty yards away, in a cloud of dust, rolled and rolled a turban of the Sikh cavalry.

And Bepin Behari Dey, who had struck a blow for liberty and killed a pariah, finding the police waiting for him as he ran out through the masked door of the printer's "go-down," did not stop to consider for what reason they might be watching there, but fired wildly, first at the man in uniform, whom he wounded in the arm, and then, more successfully, at himself. The two constables were discovered a moment later standing stupidly over the body, which had fallen across an open drain. After that the proceedings were simple enough. The bag was found on the roof, half full of cotton wool ; fragments of the shell traced it to a well-known manufacturer of such casings in Birmingham ; and the Government Inspector of Explosives took charge of the hole in the ground.

But for His Excellency's precaution, further things might have resulted from the passionate determination of four Body-guardsmen to overtake his bolting pair ; but when the aide-de-camp who sat opposite had

disengaged himself from Lord Campden's bosom, the Viceroy was seen to raise a warning arm without looking behind exactly, as he said himself afterwards, like a cabman in Piccadilly, and the chase fell back. The horses had galloped their terror away and subsided into a nervous canter when they were finally stopped by a policeman and that single priest, who seemed to hover in anticipation of just such a calamity. It was noticed that he seemed agitated as well as exhausted ; but he slipped quietly away in the crowd after giving, as was afterwards ascertained, an address too vague to be of any use. It could not, therefore, have been the house of Sir Kristodas Mukerji in Park Street, though we know that it might have been.

The Viceroy arrived at the hall of Convocation twenty minutes late, being further delayed by his inquiries after Game at the hospital, where, however, they were able completely to reassure him. His Excellency was fortunately in time to prevent the breaking up of the audience by sheer anxiety, for the news had gone before him. He was received with a battery of eyes and a dead silence ; he might have been entering a church ; but a great breath of tension relaxed stirred the audience as they resumed their seats. He listened with interest and attention to the speech of the Vice-Chancellor, whose voice occasionally shook in the delivery, at which Lord Campden looked concerned. One would have thought, from his gravely sympathetic air, that some British ruffian had attacked the person and estate of the Calcutta Bar. His Excellency delivered his own address with just a trifle of stress. If he felt emotion he expressed it in emphasis ; his words rang through the room. Anything he might have found to say would have been received, at that moment, with a

thrill, but the Viceroy had to announce and did announce the important and unlooked-for concessions, bringing the University into relation with examinations for certain superior grades of the Bengal public service, of which we have heard. The boon, no doubt, with its recognition of a new principle and its safeguards of old practice, will be described in the more fitting language of some future Blue Book. We have to do with its happy, its astonishing effect—which the Blue Book, perhaps, will make less account of—heightened as it was by complete unexpectedness, and driving home as it did to bosoms that have seldom failed to respond to the touch of confidence, or to answer magnanimity with love.

The Viceroy spoke in a strained, intense, incredulous silence, slow to take up the reality of his words, which seemed to change its character only when he referred, in a tone of the deepest feeling, to the sagacity, patience, and devotion of the Home Secretary, who had been prevented by an accident, the results of which he was glad to be able to say were not likely to be serious, from being present to rejoice with them to-day over the consummation of a benefit which he had laboured so faithfully to bring about. Lord Campden then turned to the scope of the need Regulations, and made no other reference to the thing that had passed ; but by the time he had finished all the truth was known, and as he sat down they leapt upon the chairs to cheer him. It was England and the man they cheered, even more than the concessions—then, as ever, England and the man. The strange thing was that the Secretaries lost their heads and joined in the uproar, the decorous inhuman Secretaries, and all the Fellows, and Members of the Education Department, and Sir Robert Farquhar, although they had not been made to wait till they

deserved it, as well as the young men, and the parents of the young men, who would one day take up the appointments. More than that, like an electric flash in the midst of the storm of hands and feet and cheers, and most-of-all applauding tears, there ventured a sudden shrill boyish note from the back, and instantly, while the University stood upon the platform as one man, there swelled the old words of peace and honour—

*"God save our Gracious King!
God save our noble King!"*

And again and again—

"God save the King!"

* * * * *

"And '*Bande Mataram!*'" * said with a smile His Excellency the Viceroy and Chancellor of the Calcutta University, a man quick to answer the inspirations of the heart. It was the watchword of the nascent nation, unloved by authority, dear to the people, and as they caught it from him his audience laughed and sobbed together, and would have carried him out like a Khrishna image at the festival of Vishnu, the Preserver of men.

* "Hail, Motherland!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

AFTER drawing upon himself the congratulations of half India upon his lucky escape, Game developed blood poisoning from the deeper of his scratches and died within a week. Tetanus awaits the barked skin in the mud of Calcutta, and it had a better chance at poor John than that. His own world mourned him with quiet, deep indignation and there was a great outburst of regret among the native newspapers.

"India," wrote the moderate *Commentator*, "has lost a good friend and a pariah dog. She could spare the dog, but the friend is harder to come by."

It was indisputable, as the utterances of that estimable journal always were, and it was more sincere than might at first sight be imagined.

John Game died, and the ranks closed up, and another man made the foot-prints that would have been his where the flag moves on in the history of the race. The ranks closed up, as they always have, as they always will, since there can be no faltering at the front, whatever they may do in the rear, no turning back for the vanguard from the end they cannot see. And to this official was accorded a funeral which was almost a demonstration of loyalty to the Raj whose servant he was. A thousand students accompanied it, with every sign of sorrow; and it was an extremist politician who called the meeting to discuss how most fittingly and feelingly the memory of his services should

be perpetuated by the educated classes of the land which had now no other way of thanking him. It is sad and vain to speculate upon the preferences of the dead, but it is also common, and I find myself lending an ear to the observation of Michael Foley, who said to his wife—

“If it was expedient that one man should die for the people, I fancy, as things have turned out, old John was pleased enough that it should be he.”

The body of Bepin Behari Dey was disposed of with the usual ceremonies in a privacy specially arranged and the presence of his nearest relations and of Miss Joan Mills, who is not likely to forget how she touched with fire the lips of the shrunken thing whose inhabitant had flamed at her words also. There was a strange public silence as to his fate. The tragedy he had attempted stood sinister in the light of gratitude, and in so far as it had been successful it was plainly regretted. It looked as if the old gods had checkmated Bepin in a move too high for him; they are known to prefer to keep the game in their own hands. His name went into the shadows with him. He became, with cruel quickness, the mere accident that finally turned a people of philosophers from the methods of madness. Perhaps it was to that end that he was allowed to play.

So, very early one morning when nobody knew, a little grey ash sank into the river Hooghly by the shrine of the goddess Kali, whose feet are always red. It had once been the body of Bepin Behari, but it was also, in a subtler sense, the ash of the anger of Ganendra Thakore, who left this world very shortly afterwards in a sustained spirit of reconciliation and peace. The jail hospital authorities noted that his bodily decline began from the day on which Bepin met his self-inflicted fate,

but one might look in vain in their daily chart to know when his anger died. He left a message for his countrymen, which, after some time and much consultation, they were allowed to hear, Sir Matthew Starke insisting that it could do no possible harm—

“Trust the Mother—beware the Mahratta.”

The people received it with reverence, the *Pioneer* made it the subject of a leading article, and so it passed into the history of a people whose virtues began, shortly afterwards, to be discovered by many persons hitherto, perhaps, a little blinded by their own.

I do not know what revulsion Joan Mills felt when the rite was revealed to which she had been so effective a priestess; but it would be unwise, I think, to hope too much from it. It was certainly not long before she had the tone of the philosopher for the loss of both her lovers, though she placed them very differently in the category of martyrdom. It would perhaps be accurate to say that for Bepin she had the bow of acquiescence, for John the shrug.

“What does it matter, a little disorder—a life here and a life there,” she said to the Roy ladies, “so long as a principle shines out brighter and clearer than before?”

They had no answer for her. They seemed to understand her as little as effigies of law and order might have done, turning upon the solemn, repudiating eyes. She was beginning to find them very silent. Ananda, at the reverberation of working anarchy, had really taken his curly hair and spectacles into hiding up-country, and his mother and aunts seemed much less alive to the covetable position of women in the West than while he was with them. Joan was often obliged to remind herself oftener than ever of the dormant character of their intelligence. But she never

dreamed of abandoning her mission to them, never even in thought turned her face toward England, even on that black morning when the moderate *Commentator*, which had suddenly become the household journal, dealt her what she acknowledged to be indeed a blow. It took the form, to which she bitterly found herself well accustomed, of a Reuter's telegram, which announced that for the "first time in eighteen years" the constituency of Further Angus had been unfaithful to the representative who had given it a name in the world, and that some other seat would have to be found for the veteran Vulcan Mills, if the party was to continue to benefit by his presence in the House of Commons. Meanwhile it was probable that the leadership of the State Socialist Party would devolve upon either Mr. Howard Innes or Mr. Philip Dream. A line or two of explanation pointed out that the textile workers of Further Angus had for some time resented Mr. Mills' gospel of boycott to Bengal, in view of the depression of trade, that there had been a considerable desertion of Practical Socialists to the Tory Democrat who had captured the seat; and that it was no doubt prejudicial to Mr. Vulcan Mills' interests that the attempt upon the life of the Viceroy had been made just three days before the general election. Rightly or wrongly, there was a strong tendency throughout the country to see in the outrage a terrible fruit of misdirected encouragement and unbalanced sympathy; and even in Further Angus this conviction had struck home. On the other hand, that dastardly deed had apparently redounded to the profit of the Government, which had been returned in such strength as to justify the repudiation of the more clamorous section of its Socialist supporters with which it had faced the electors. A vision of India in peril, even

from foes of her own household, had swept the imagination of the electorate, at the last moment, clear of meaner things ; and the Government which had deported a disturber of her peace so clearly at its own expense, scored heavily in admiring votes. Sri Yadava, priest and politician, must have seen with rejoicing a husband not yet so cold.

Joan read it all, and her courage held. So much the more reason, she argued, why one hand should cling to its torch in the dim Indian night, so much the more reason still why that hand should be hers.

But when the net closed about Nagtollah, and the arms and the maps and the assigned districts were discovered, when the laboratory was exposed behind the cow-house, and the floor of the go-down disgorged the tinned provisions for a revolution, and the tank beneath the palms gave up its dead in the shape of vats and iron boxes full of nameless things—then the mother of Ananda came and spoke to her, while the grandmother scowled fearfully in agreement.

"We are very sorry," she said, "but we think you had better go away. It is time of great anxiety—you will be well in England. You will be well with your father."

"But he has given me to India," protested his daughter.

"No. You will be well with your father," repeated the mother of Ananda, with all the obstinacy of an undeveloped intelligence. It was more than a hint, and was an admonition ; and it seemed to leave Miss Mills uncomfortably without an alternative. She left for Bombay by the mail train of the next evening, having added to her luggage, let us hope not unprofitably, several volumes of that very charming series entitled "The Wisdom of the East."

Thus the angel stayed the hand of Abraham, and his offspring returned to him at Aden in the second saloon of the Peninsular and Oriental steamship *Moldavia*, by which he also was permitted to proceed to England.

* * * * *

And now, when the spring faints among her dog roses upon the slopes of the Himalayas, there come three among the pilgrims of the Way, whom we should know again by the likeness of their faces to persons who once inhabited a plaster palace of this world situated in Park Street, Calcutta. The dress of two of them has changed, but dress does change in the East, to match the meditations. The old man wears the sannyasi's yellow like the very garment of his soul, the girl seems rather to wrap her heart in it ; the priest and his garb are one.

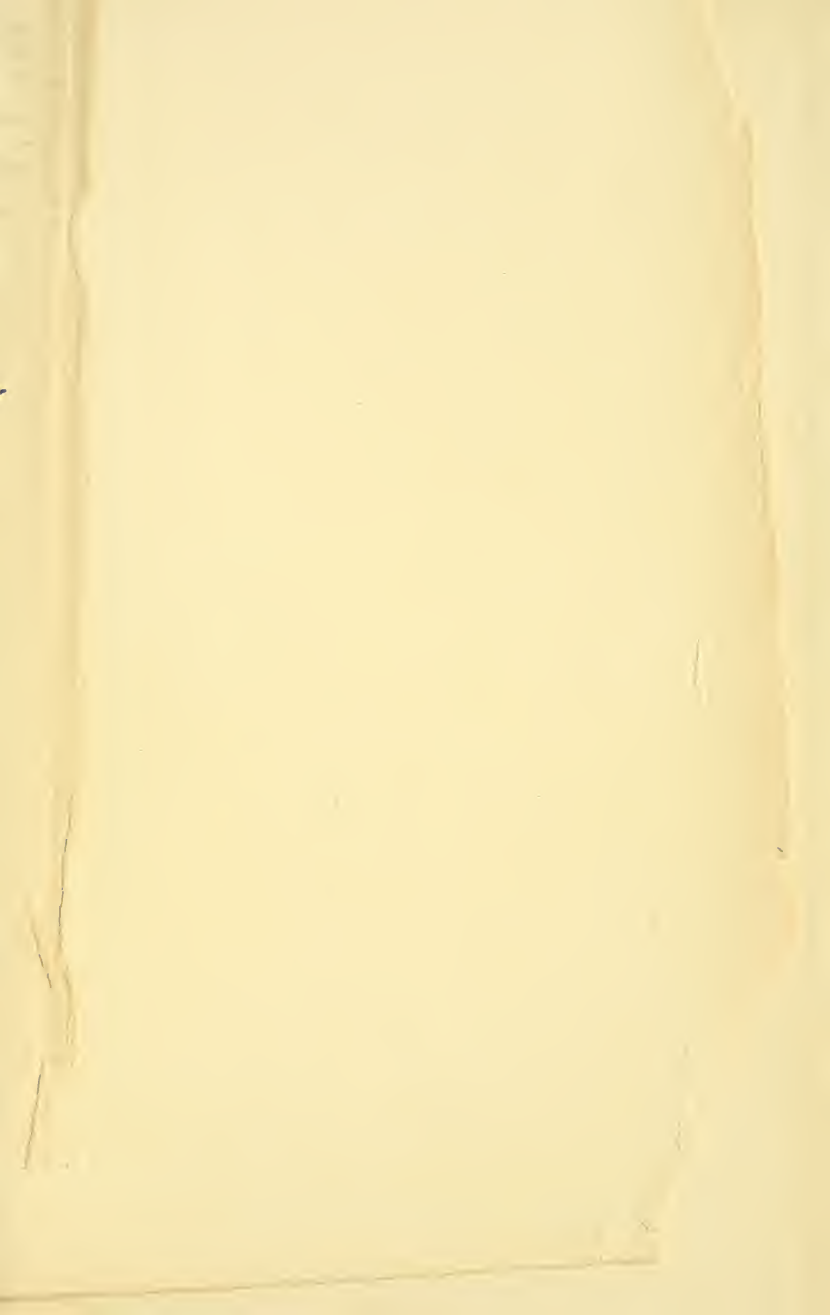
The Way has led out of all thoroughfares and past all cities to the mountain forest where the gods meet, to the high shrines where the gods rest ; and it will not return, nor will these travellers seek any other. Henceforth from holy place to holy place, they will gather that wisdom of the heart that rewards the roof that shelters them, the hand that feeds them, that wisdom of the heart which is the gift and the glory of the Mother whose children they are. Henceforth, by remembering ever the Rule and the Real, by holding with their own souls the eternal conversation of peace, they will endeavour to forget that which so imposed itself as life. Life not having pleased them, they have exercised towards it the profound and delicate option which is their inheritance ; they have left it in the world.

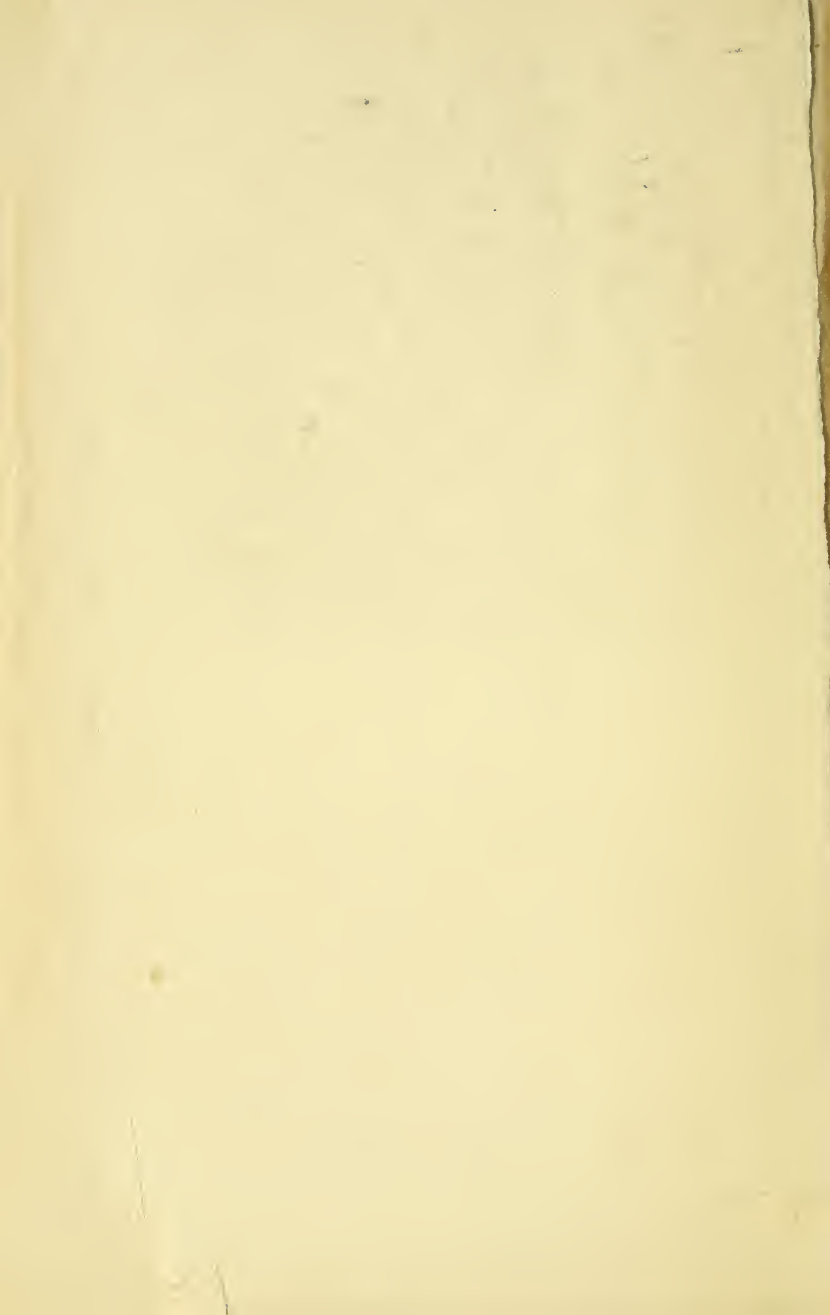
The old man never turns to remember it there ; his thought is all for the summit ; and when the girl looks down the moonlit valleys to the sleeping plains it is

no plaster palace that she sees. The Rani Janaki has returned to her widowhood, but I do not know—I do not know for whom she prays. Little indeed can we know, but at least let us dream that the Mother is well pleased with these her children, the Mother, whose sanctions are won with no heathen oblation—

* * * * *

And in the Foreign Office at Calcutta, which has the care of all matters of ceremonial, there is a safe, and in the safe a small morocco box, and in the box a rather pretty enamelled bauble on a ribbon. It is the decoration of the Order of the Indian Empire, returned on behalf of Kristodas Mukerji when he retired from occasions upon which it would be suitable. I believe the Foreign Secretary does not quite know what to do with it.





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